the weekly
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DECEMBER 28, 2009 $4.95

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$4 GAS

Another **unfortunate truth** about Congress's climate bill

As the U.S. Senate considers the Kerry-Boxer climate legislation, Americans aren't getting the whole truth. A recent study* found the House-passed climate bill could lead to $4 per-gallon gasoline – and the new Kerry-Boxer bill could be even more costly.

America is in the middle of a harsh recession. Think about the impact of $4 gas. Yet another unfortunate truth about Congress's climate bill.

Learn more at **EnergyCitizens.org**

*Calculation based on *Son of Waxman-Markey: More Politics Makes for a More Costly Bill*, The Heritage Foundation, June 16, 2009

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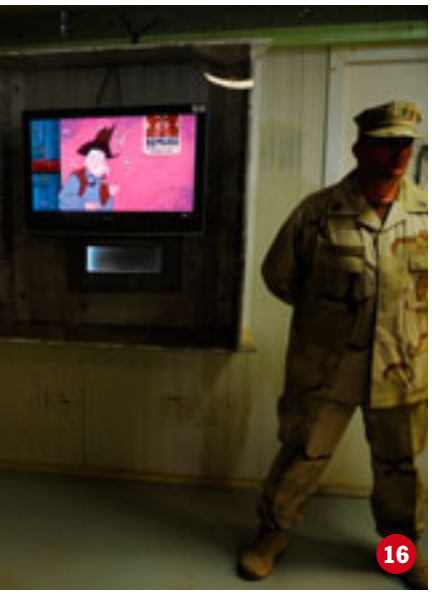
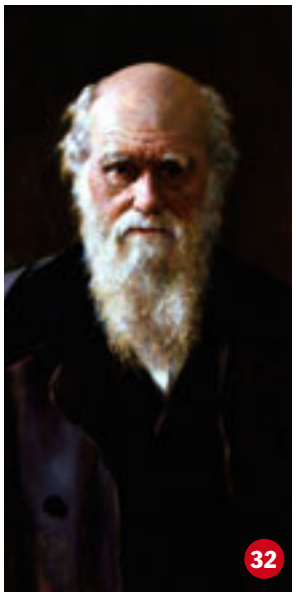
Contents

December 28, 2009 • Volume 15, Number 15

5


16


32

2 The Scrapbook *Ivan Koloff, Mugabe in Copenhagen, Eco-Sex & more*

5 Casual *Joseph Bottum on the words of Christmas*

7 Editorial *Catch and Release*

Articles

9 Stealth Unionization BY PATRICK J. WRIGHT & MICHAEL D. JAHR
How 40,000 home day care providers were forced to start paying union dues

11 The Next GOP Senator from Texas BY JOHN MCCORMACK
Michael Williams's bid to succeed Kay Bailey Hutchison

12 Back to the Future BY GABRIEL SCHOENFELD
British anti-Semitism returns—with a vengeance

14 It Can Happen Here BY STEPHEN SCHWARTZ
America's 'homegrown' terrorism was made in South Asia

Features

16 The Real Gitmo BY THOMAS JOSCELYN
What I saw at America's best detention facility for terrorists

23 The EPA's Power Grab BY STEVEN F. HAYWARD
The climate campaigners play their trump card, but it may turn out to be a joker

28 Resistance Is Futile BY ANDREW STUTTAFORD
The triumph of the Eurocrats over the peoples of Europe

Books & Arts

32 Darwin Turns 200 BY DAVID GELERNTER
The gentleman-naturalist who reinvented biology

34 Alive and Well BY PETER BERKOWITZ
A historian of modern conservatism ponders the future

37 'Messiah' Man BY ALGIS VALIUNAS
The music of George Frideric Handel 'makes you want to live'

41 Black and White BY EVE TUSHNET
What the modern eye saw when looking at Africa

42 Avatarocious BY JOHN PODHORETZ
Another spectacle hits an iceberg and sinks

44 Parody *World leaders grade themselves*

COVER BY GETTY IMAGES / JOHN MOORE

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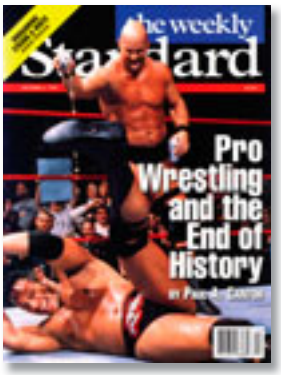
Only in America

This month's issue of *The Wrestler* magazine features a long, engaging interview with "Ivan Koloff" (born Jim Perras). Ten years ago Mr. Koloff figured prominently in a WEEKLY STANDARD cover story, Paul Cantor's "Pro Wrestling and the End of History" (October 4, 1999). Describing wrestling's tradition of creating heels to suit America's conscious and subconscious fears, Cantor called Koloff the greatest villain in the history of the sport.



Koloff's character—a Communist no-goodnik—loomed large during wrestling's Cold War years. In 1971, at Madison Square Garden, he defeated fan-favorite Bruno Sammartino, ending the great champion's seven-and-a-half year reign in the then WWWF. Koloff went on to lead a stable of other "Russian" villains. His most notable protégé was his "cousin," Nikita Koloff, who, billed as "The Russian Nightmare," cut a wide swath through the sport.

With the Cold War won, THE SCRAPBOOK is happy to report that Ivan Koloff's quintessentially American life seems to have turned out quite well. Born on a farm in Ontario, Canada, Koloff, now 67, lives with his wife in North Carolina. A recovering drug addict and alcoholic, he occasionally still wrestles. He's also a born-again Christian, who runs his own ministry. It was Nikita (who is, of course, neither Russian, nor related to Ivan) who led Koloff to Christ.

"Nikita was the one who introduced me to the Lord and the gift He left for us," Koloff explains. "People ask if we're related. I say not by blood, but through the blood of Jesus. Nikita is a soldier for Christ and a great example for me to follow in his footsteps."

In the course of the interview, *The Wrestler* asked Koloff about the praise Cantor heaped on him in THE WEEKLY STANDARD. Koloff noted that it's not the first time people have mentioned Cantor's article to him.

Cantor, a professor in the University of Virginia's department of English, jokingly (we think) tells THE SCRAPBOOK that this is "perhaps the culmination of my career as a cited academic."

What's more, says Cantor, he and Koloff actually met.

> He was here in Charlottesville at the local Wal-Mart promoting one of his born-again Christian books, and signing them for kids. I had no idea he was there, but as always was scouring the Wal-Mart for cheap DVDs. I talked briefly to Koloff, and told him that I'd seen him wrestle Sammartino at the Boston Garden in the 1970s. It was early afternoon: he said: "Come back around 8, when the little kids are gone. We can talk honestly then." Ever the pro, he didn't want to disillusion any kids [by not staying in character]. So I went home and got a copy of THE WEEKLY STANDARD article for him and came back to give it to him. I apologized to him in advance for the "Lenin on steroids" phrase—fortunately he seemed to think that I was worried about the "Lenin" part, not the "steroids" part.

Cantor tells THE SCRAPBOOK that he's got a contract with University Press of Kentucky for a book of his essays on pop culture, and the wrestling essay should be in it. We'll alert you when it reaches the bookstores. ♦

Thugs in Copenhagen

Private space travel can't come soon enough for THE SCRAPBOOK, as we would like to resign our membership in the "world community"—which disgraced itself at the Copenhagen climate meetings that ended last Friday.

There were many low points at the U.N.'s anti-capitalism propaganda-fest, but the nadir for THE SCRAPBOOK came when Zimbabwean tyrant Robert Mugabe—responsible for the deaths and immiseration of thousands of his countrymen—took the stage. Really, the man is not morally fit to scrub the tires of the many limousines that shuttled the global-warming VIP delegates around Copenhagen.

According to the State Department's most recent human rights report, Mugabe's rule in 2008 featured many

> killings by paramilitary forces. . . . For example, on April 5, [Mugabe's ZANU-PF party] youths and war veterans killed Tapiwa Mbwanda, MDC [the opposition party] organizing secretary for Hurungwe East. According to Human Rights Watch (HRW), four people were arrested in connection with the murder but were released without charge after a local ZANU-PF leader demanded their release. . . .
>
> There were killings by party supporters during the year. For example, on June 7, a mob of ZANU-PF supporters killed Dadirai Chipiro, the wife of Patson Chipiro, a MDC local chairman in Mhondoro, by cutting off her hand and both feet, dragging her body into the kitchen of their home, setting it on fire, and burning her alive.
>
> On June 16, ZANU-PF supporters attacked the home of Harare's Deputy Mayor and MDC Councilor for Ward 42, Emmanuel Chiroto, and took away his wife, Abigail. On June 18, her burned body was found on a nearby farm. HRW reported that police refused to take action to investigate the killing. . . .
>
> Despite the nearly 200 killings resulting from political violence, there were no prosecutions or convictions in any of the cases. . . . There were no developments in previously reported killings from 2006 or 2007.

Unsurprisingly, Zimbabwe's GDP

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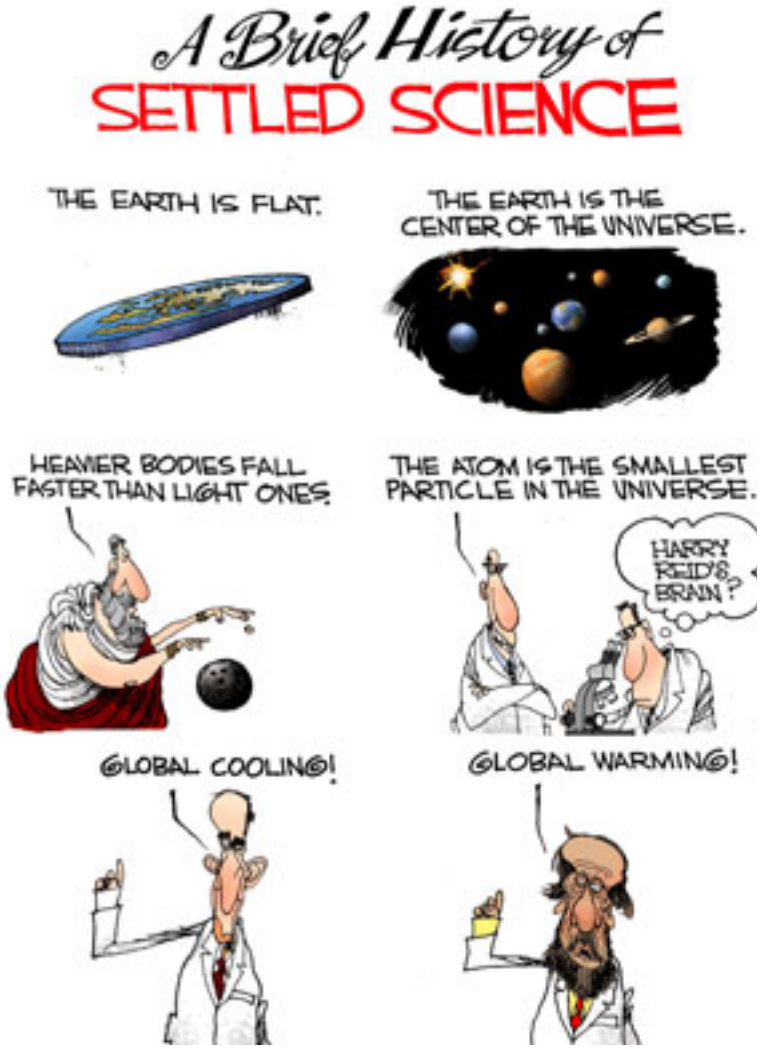
per capita of $200 is among the lowest in the world—not that this destitution impinges on the Big Man's lifestyle. An entourage of 59 accompanied Mugabe to the climate summit, including First Lady Amai Grace, notorious for a reported $100,000-plus two-hour shopping spree in Paris last year.

While she was no doubt laying waste to the high-end boutiques of Copenhagen, Mugabe was haranguing the delegates:

> Why is the guilty north not showing the same fundamentalist spirit it exhibits in our developing countries on human rights matters on this more menacing question of climate change? Where is its commitment to retributive justice which we see it applying on other issues? Where is sanctions for climate change offenders?
>
> When a country spits at Kyoto Protocol, by seeking to retreat from its dictates, or simply by refusing to accede to it, is it not undermining the rule of global law? When countries spew hazardous emissions for selfish consumptionist ends, in the process threatening land masses and atmospheric space of smaller and weaker nations are they not guilty of gross human rights violations?
>
> We raise these questions not out of spite or vindictiveness, but out of concern for our very endangered livelihoods. When these capitalist gods of carbon burp and belch their dangerous emissions, it is we, the lesser mortals of the developing sphere who gasp, starve, sink and eventually die.

When Robert Mugabe talks about "our very endangered livelihoods," you can be sure he is using the royal "we." He went on to whine about "illegal sanctions unilaterally imposed on [Zimbabwe] by the west"—because of his many murderous deeds. Thanks to "these undeserved sanctions, we have only been able to draw a mere US$1 million in the last three years from the Global Environment Fund."

Frankly, that was $1 million too much. As we said, include us out of any community that gives such a man a platform—or any money. ♦



Perfidious Reagan

A quarter of a century later, Ronald Reagan's invasion of Grenada and overthrow of the Communist government there is still paying psychic dividends. *Reason* magazine's Michael Moynihan draws our attention to the sad, sad story of a Swedish radical, denied her share of a literary estate because of American perfidy and that cowboy in the White House.

Writes Moynihan:

> Perhaps you have seen (or, heaven forbid, read) one of those ubiquitous Stieg Larsson mystery novels, in which a brilliant feminist hacker, in concert with a brilliant left-wing journalist modelled on the author, skulk around Stockholm fighting fascists and solving murders. The books have been massive bestsellers in America and Europe, making Larsson perhaps the richest author in Scandinavia. Slight problem, though, is that Larsson, a chubby chain smoker, died a few years back and his only known will, written in the 1970s when he was a cash-poor revolutionary, bequeathed his entire estate to the Umeå chapter of Sweden's communist party. In other words, if you read Larsson you support communism!
>
> Well, not exactly. A court found that the old will was not legally binding, and reverted control of the estimated $20 million ($10 million when the Swedes are done with it) estate to Larsson's father and brother. But Larsson had a longtime girlfriend, fellow political radical Eva Gabrielsson, who wants a piece of the action, resulting in a long, acriminous court trial.

Where does Grenada enter the picture? Well, in an interview with the *Los Angeles Times*, Gabrielsson explains why she and the late Stieg Larsson never married (which dis-

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qualifies her under Swedish law from a share of the estate):

> "We did plan to get married, in 1983, except the United States did something bad then: You invaded Grenada," the longtime leftist said recently over coffee. She and Larsson had visited the Caribbean island nation a few years before in support of its left-wing government. After the U.S. invasion led to the regime's overthrow, the couple decided to go back and investigate the situation, so marriage plans were put "on hold," said Gabrielsson, now 56.

One more reason to like Ronald Reagan. ♦

Sentences We Didn't Finish

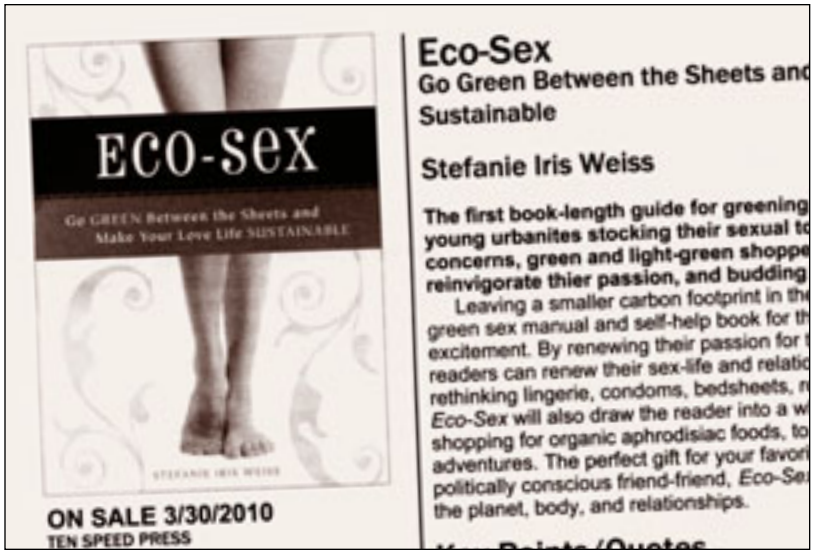
'So what are we to believe: that huge numbers of British and American scientists have entered into a conspiracy to dupe the world on climate change? Why? What would they stand to gain? . . . " (Tim Rutten, *Los Angeles Times*, December 12). ♦

The Joy of . . . Eco-Sex?

Arriving in bookstores this spring and just in time for the 40th anniversary of Earth Day is a new book that promises to help reduce your carbon footprint while increasing your carnal pleasure—a book that will allow you and your loved one to say, "last night, the earth moved, and in a positive, environmentally friendly direction."

We kid you not. It's called *Eco-Sex: Go Green Between the Sheets and Make Your Love Life Sustainable* by Stefanie Iris Weiss. Described by Ten Speed Press as "the first book-length guide for greening your sex life, *Eco-Sex* is perfect for young urbanites stocking their sexual toolbox, people with chemical concerns, green and light-green shoppers, singles and couples looking to reinvigorate their passion, and budding ecosexuals everywhere."

Normally The Scrapbook would use this as an opportunity for cheap puns and double-entendres. But with a description like the one above, there's not much else to say, though we do have some concerns. Frankly, we didn't know there was even a distinction between "green and light-green shoppers" and the term "budding ecosexuals" makes us a bit wary. As for "urbanites stocking their sexual toolbox," well, we'll just leave it at that. ♦



No, we're not making this up.

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And Heaven and Nature Sing

If you're any kind of writer—if you're any kind of reader, for that matter—you know there are things that words want to do. Oh, we speak with them and write with them and read with them, often enough, using them as clumsy rocks to hammer out the rough meanings and crude messages we need for getting on with our lives.

But in themselves, words have other things in mind: deeds and relations and purposes all their own. They want to swirl and turn and join and break in certain ways; they want to express the truth about themselves. And if you don't let them notice you watching—if you eavesdrop quietly on them, late at night when they think you're asleep—you can sometimes see them come to life, like the Nutcracker leading his toy soldiers to war against the Mouse King.

All of which is a way of saying that I don't know a single real writer or reader—a single person awake to the ways that language wants to go—who doesn't believe in Christmas. Oh, part of it is the funny ambiguity in that phrase "believe in." Remember the old joke about the down-east Maine farmer who, asked if he believed in infant baptism, replied, laconically, that he'd seen it done? Whether we like it or not, we've all seen Christmas done, seen the yuletide words in their cotillions, waltzing and promenading, the quadrille of the season.

But there is something more in Advent than just the happenstantial activity of our nativity language, something more than the plain task of getting across a complex seasonal meaning. *Reindeer* and *Santa*, *swaddling clothes* and *mangers*, *ornaments* and *tinsel*, *poinsettias* and *pines*. They aren't things, exactly, around Christmas. They aren't even ideas, down at the root. They are a vocabulary, most of all, and Christmas is true as poetry—words speaking, each to each—long before it's true as brute fact. Christmas is one of those moments when the language has been let alone to do what it really wants to do.

And it came to pass in those days . . . no room for them in the inn . . . keeping watch over their flock by night . . . tidings of great joy. The day atheism draws to itself a natural language, the day it seems anything more than cavemen grunting as they chip away at flint, is the day I'll admit that even self-proclaimed atheists actually believe in it.

HAL MAYFORTH

Children know this, learning the season by learning the words: *Bethlehem* and *sleigh bells*, *chestnuts* and *elves*, *wise men* and *candy canes*. G.K. Chesterton once complained about Scrooge and Bob Cratchit and Jacob Marley and all the rest, insisting that Dickens proved with *A Christmas Carol* his very English separation from the deep wellsprings of European culture—for, said Chesterton, never was there an event that had inspired more mythology in Western Civilization, and still Dickens had to invent his own Christmas myth.

But Chesterton got it wrong. Christmas wants to grow richer. Christmas wants to be as extravagant as that impossible turkey Bob Cratchit receives from Scrooge on Christmas morning. *Ornaments* and *tinsel*, *snowflakes* and *crèches*, *shepherds* and *magi*. Christmas would gobble up the whole language, if it could, and Charles Dickens—the great intuitive writer of the age—knew it.

The composer Ralph Vaughan Williams once put a similar plaint, grumbling that a superior Easter carol had been hijacked to make that inferior Victorian Christmas song everyone now knows—the one about Good King Wenceslas and his annoying page boy: *Bring me flesh and bring me wine, / bring me pine logs hither*. But Vaughan Williams, too, missed the point. There are words and grammatical constructions we still know—language that remains in the great common wordstock, wrapped like presents under the tree—only because Christmas carols preserve them for us, drawing them into the great verbal dance: *hark* and *noël*, *dayspring* and *yule*, *ha'penny* and *wassail*.

Of course, some people don't believe in the natural poetry of language—the ones who won't raise their eyes off their ordinary work with words to wonder why these tools shimmer a little bit more than they need to. And those are the people who won't be persuaded that certain objects might go together because their ideas match, and certain ideas might go together because their words have danced, side by side, late in the great unconscious night.

But for the rest of us, something like evidence exists in the rich vocabulary Christmas has gathered to itself. *Wreaths* and *holly*, *fruitcakes* and *mistletoe*, *Joseph* and *Mary*. *St. Nicholas* and Scrooge's *humbug*, for that matter. Why shouldn't language gather in this way at Christmas time? Words want to speak the truth, after all.

Joseph Bottum

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Catch and Release

Last spring, in an interview with *60 Minutes*, Barack Obama criticized his predecessor over the detainees at Guantánamo Bay. That wasn't new. What was surprising was one of the arguments the president made. When Steve Kroft pointed out that some of those released had been working to recruit others to jihad, Obama agreed.

> Well, there's no doubt that we have not done a particularly effective job in sorting through who are truly dangerous individuals that we've got to make sure are not a threat to us, who are folks that we just swept up.

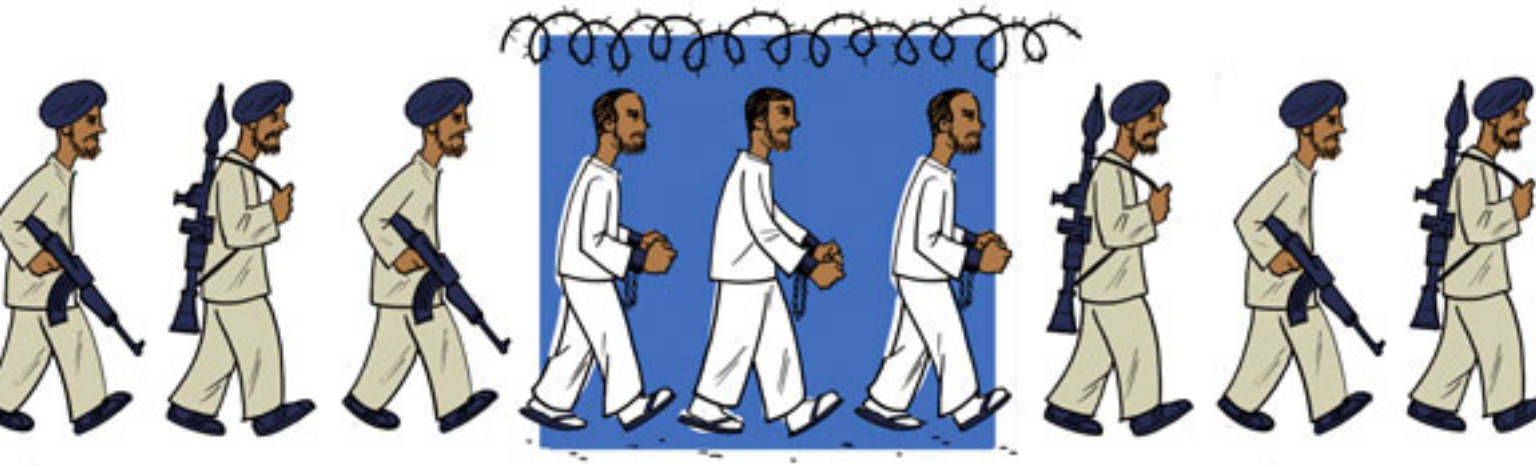
A classified Defense Intelligence Agency report leaked to the *New York Times* in May supported that claim. *Return to the Battlefield* showed that 74 detainees transferred or released from Guantánamo had returned to jihad. That's one in seven—a recidivism rate of 14 percent.

So the problem, according to Obama, was that the Bush administration was *too lenient*. The obvious solution: Apply greater scrutiny to detainees under consideration for release and slow the pace of transfers. But the Obama administration went the opposite direction. Having promised to shutter the detention facility at Guantánamo within one year, the administration has lowered the threshold for detainees eligible to be shipped out and is expediting the procedures for transferring or releasing them.

A total of 31 Guantánamo detainees have been transferred or released since Obama took office.

Among them are several men who acknowledged receiving training in al Qaeda's notorious "al Farouq" camp. One, Binyam Mohamed, was slated to participate in the next wave of al Qaeda attacks on American soil in 2002. Another, Ahmed Zuhair, was convicted *in absentia* of participating in terrorist attacks in Bosnia in the late 1990s and almost certainly participated in the assassination of William Jefferson, an American working for the United Nations. Several others that have been released have admitted to training at a camp at Tora Bora under Abdul Haq, a member of al Qaeda's shura council and a senior al Qaeda leader the Treasury Department has designated as a terrorist.

And dozens more are coming. On December 3, Secretary of Defense Robert Gates told a congressional committee that more than half of the detainees remaining at Gitmo have been approved for transfer or release—116 of 210.



ROB ULLMAN

The 210 detainees who are still there are not wayward goatherds. Most are known jihadists. Many of them have trained in al Qaeda camps or stayed at an al Qaeda safe house. An overwhelming majority was considered too dangerous to release during the intensive vetting at the end of the Bush administration.

The Defense Department has now produced an updated version of *Return to the Battlefield*. According to four separate sources familiar with the study, the rate of recidivism is increasing. One source said there has been a "spike" in the number of former detainees involved in jihad against the United States and its allies. Another called the increase "significant" and "deeply troubling."

But the Obama administration—despite its self-

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congratulatory claims of transparency—is refusing to release it. A Pentagon spokesman tells us the latest report is classified and there are no plans to release it.

Republicans in Congress want it out. On December 18, Senator Kit Bond of Missouri, the ranking Republican on the Senate Intelligence Committee, sent a letter to Director of National Intelligence Dennis Blair asking for release of the report:

> As the administration moves forward with plans to release or transfer detainees from the secure facility at Guantánamo Bay to third countries, it is important for the American people to understand fully the dangers previously-released detainees continue to pose to our national security. Moreover, because the administration has decided to import terrorist detainees into the U.S.—including 9/11 mastermind Khalid Sheikh Mohammed and future residents of Thomson prison—their ultimate fate will be determined by U.S. judges and juries. The American people should be aware of the likely threat these terrorists would pose if a court decided to release any one of them into our nation's communities.

And Peter Hoekstra of Michigan, ranking Republican on the House Intelligence Committee, has also asked, according to his spokesman, that "the recidivism rate be made available to the American people." It has been in the past.

The Bush administration released the first recidivism study in June 2008. President Obama has promised to run "the most transparent administration in history." But when it comes to the DIA recidivist study, it is not even as transparent as its predecessor. Many of the recidivists, moreover, are already known—there is no reason that the government should classify those details that can be sourced to newspaper accounts.

In February, for example, the Saudi Kingdom published a list of its 85 most-wanted terrorists. At least 11 of them were once detained at Gitmo. Said al Shihri was held at Guantánamo. He is now the deputy leader of al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula, an al Qaeda affiliate that the Obama administration has told us is one of the strongest in the world. Ibrahim Rubaish was held at Gitmo, too. He is now the chief ideologist for al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula and is responsible for providing the theological justifications for al Qaeda's terror. Two other members of the Saudi 11 have been killed in shootouts.

Every month, it seems, we learn about more Gitmo detainees who have returned to jihad. In June 2008, the DoD reported that 37 former detainees were 'confirmed or suspected' of returning to terrorism.

Every month, it seems, we learn about more Gitmo detainees who have returned to jihad. In June 2008, the DoD reported that 37 former detainees were "confirmed or suspected" of returning to terrorism. On January 13, 2009—seven months later—Pentagon spokesman Geoff Morrell said that number had climbed to 61. In May 2009, when the last report was leaked to the *New York Times*, the DoD had found that same metric had risen further to 74—exactly double the Pentagon's estimate just 11 months before. At that rate, the Pentagon is identifying on average more than three former Gitmo detainees who are thought to have returned to terrorism each month.

If ex-Guantánamo prisoners are rejoining the fight, just as the administration plans to release more of those prisoners, shouldn't the American public know this?

—Stephen F. Hayes

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Stealth Unionization

How 40,000 home day care providers in Michigan were forced to start paying union dues.

BY PATRICK J. WRIGHT & MICHAEL D. JAHR

GARY LOCKE

Midland, Michigan

The barren economy of this rustbelt state is weakening the labor movement, but well-connected unions continue to shape Michigan's politics. So it's not surprising that some are willing to take extraordinary measures to help repopulate union ranks—even to the extent of making the state an accessory to a scheme to shanghai more than 40,000 home-based day care entrepreneurs and providers into a government-employee union.

This development was first brought to the attention of the Mackinac Center for Public Policy, where we work, in early 2009, when the center was approached by Sherry Loar, owner of Baby Steps Childcare Center in Petoskey. She told us that though she operated the business in her home, the Michigan Department of Human Services was forcing her to pay "dues" to a government-employee union she had never heard of.

Loar's story seemed outrageous. Could a private business owner—an employer—really be considered a public-union member? It turned out that not only Loar, but also thousands like her, are to have an estimated total of $3.7 million withdrawn from their pay and diverted to union coffers each year. Worse, the Michigan Department of Human Services is withholding the dues without authorization of state law.

The bizarre unionization drive appears to have begun in 2006, when the United Auto Workers and the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees joined together to form a new union, Child Care Providers Together Michigan (CCPTM). The intent, according to union documents, was to organize all the home-based child care providers in the state.

The CCPTM, however, faced a challenge. With tens of thousands of home-based day care providers scattered across Michigan, who would act as the "employer" for the union to organize against?

In April 2006, the CCPTM sought to organize against the Michigan Department of Human Services, which mails subsidy checks to home-based day care providers whenever they care for children whose parents qualify for state and federal assistance. The effort was quickly abandoned, however, perhaps because of political concerns about nearly doubling the state workforce.

The union's predicament was apparently resolved in July 2006, when the Department of Human Services signed an "interlocal agreement" with a community college in Flint. Under state law, these agreements establish joint government agencies

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to coordinate responses to regional problems; in this case, the agreement created a shell corporation known as the Michigan Home Based Child Care Council. The council, according to department documents, would assist the department in child care matters—and "have the right to bargain collectively" as a "public employer."

The CCPTM could now claim it had an entity to organize against.

In September 2006, the union filed a petition with a state labor commission seeking an organizing election. When a vote by mail was conducted of the 40,500 providers who would be "represented," the outcome was 5,921 in favor of the union and 475 opposed—largely, one suspects, because the CCPTM got out the pro-union vote, while the rest of the providers didn't realize what was happening.

In 2008, the CCPTM and the council entered into what they called a "collective bargaining agreement." Tellingly, they conceded in the agreement they would need the assistance of the Department of Human Services.

The reason seems clear. Without the department's involvement, the union had no easy way to collect its "members'" dues. The department, on the other hand, could withhold dues whenever it sent checks to home-based day care providers on behalf of low-income parents receiving federal assistance. The department's decision to perform the withholding means that nearly $4 million in public funding intended to assist low-income parents while they work or attend school is ending up instead in union bank accounts.

Loar, who is married to a union member, says she was shocked when she received notification that she belonged to a union. "I'm not opposed to unions; everything has a place," she explains. "But when we enter my door, this is my home."

No matter. "The next time I received my co-pay check, they took out union dues," she says. "I can't take money out of an employee's check without a signature. How can the government take money out of a paycheck? I actually work for my parents and my children. I do not work for the state."

The Mackinac Center's public-interest law firm decided to make this violation of Loar's civil rights its first case, and it filed suit against the Department of Human Services at the Michigan Court of Appeals in September (at this writing, the court has taken no action). The argument was simple: The only constitutional way to convert people into public employees in Michigan is through an act of the state legislature—not through a rigged agreement between two government agencies each of which lacked the power to do this itself. In short, the department's withholding of "dues" is illegal.

While Michigan's mechanism for creating more than 40,000 new union members is unique, the general effort is not. For several years, unions like the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees and the Service Employees International Union have been working to unionize day care workers in a number of states.

Of course, there are other objections to this "unionization." Common sense tells us that home-based day care employers are not employees, and that the parents who select and pay them are their customers. Even if some of those parents receive a government subsidy to help defray the cost of day care, the state does not "employ" the day care owners any more than the federal government "employs" grocery store owners who accept food stamps. In fact, it is doubtful that even the state legislature could convert all these day care providers into a collective bargaining unit. Compulsory unionization is permitted to override citizens' First Amendment right of free association only in the interest of labor peace. That doesn't apply here.

While Michigan's mechanism for creating more than 40,000 new union members is unique, the general effort is not. For several years, unions like the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees and the Service Employees International Union have been working to unionize day care workers in a number of states, sometimes even battling over jurisdictions. We have identified 14 states where unionization of day care providers has occurred.

An element common to many of these endeavors is subsidy money, which in large part originates from federal Temporary-Assistance-for-Needy-Families block grants. In Michigan, despite the fact that the state labor commission recognized the bargaining unit as all home-based day care providers, "dues" are taken only from those who receive subsidy checks. In essence, the union has organized against the money.

All this turns the concept of collective bargaining on its head. As Loar says: "How can I be in a union? In my house, I'm both labor and management." Michelle Berry, another Mackinac Center client, points out that she's seen no benefits from her imposed union membership: "There's no communication. We have a deduction taken from a check, and where that goes, I have no clue."

The notion that these independent entrepreneurs are government employees simply because a few of their customers receive government aid means that attempts to unionize doctors, landlords, and independent grocers can't be far behind. Still, even state agencies and powerful unions should have to follow the law. If union and government officials want to enact unfair and destructive policies, they should have the decency to do it without violating the state and federal constitutions. ♦

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The Next GOP Senator from Texas

Michael Williams's bid to succeed Kay Bailey Hutchison. BY JOHN MCCORMACK

After the 2010 elections, there's a good chance the only African American in the U.S. Senate will be a conservative Republican from Texas named Michael Williams. Though he's been running for over a year and is something of a rock star on the tea party circuit in the Lonestar State, you probably haven't heard much about Williams's bid for the Senate. That's because he's been stuck in a holding pattern, waiting for Senator Kay Bailey Hutchison to retire.

Hutchison has promised to step down after she faces off against Governor Rick Perry in the March 2 gubernatorial GOP primary—and after she's cast her vote in the major legislative fights of this Congress. "For all of the good Republicans out there who plan on running for my seat next year," Hutchison said in November, "make no mistake: This [retirement] is going to happen. It just isn't going to happen until after health care reform and cap and trade are finished. And that will be after the primary election."

After Hutchison retires, Governor Perry will likely appoint a successor. Williams, a charismatic, bowtie-wearing railroad commissioner, is in prime position to get the nod, and incumbency would boost his prospects.

In the special election he'd likely face a crowded field of Democrats and Republicans on November 2. If none got 50 percent of the vote, the top two would advance to a runoff in early December. Houston mayor Bill White and former state comptroller John Sharp are leading Democratic contenders. Lieutenant Governor David Dewhurst and former Texas secretary of state Roger Williams are two other strong Republican candidates.

Though Michael Williams trails his Republican rivals in fundraising, he scored early endorsements from Newt Gingrich and Rudy Giuliani. And, on December 10, he was in Washington to accept the endorsement of Jim DeMint's Senate Conservatives Fund. "Millions of people who've spoken out at town halls and tea parties . . . are looking for common sense mainstream leaders who believe in the principles of our Constitution," DeMint told reporters, as he stood with Williams outside the Capitol. "He's one of the most inspiring people I've heard talk about those principles in a long time."

Michael Williams

Addressing a dozen or more tea parties that drew from 300 to 3,000 attendees, Williams has honed his message opposing Obama's resurrection of big government. "Washington is on course to double our debt in the next five years," he said at one rally, "but don't be fooled by the word debt. It is simply a tax increase deferred to another day that will fill the bank vaults in Beijing."

Williams is a solid fiscal and social conservative, but his rhetoric and many of his views are mainstream. "It's one thing for Medicare to be for the elderly and the disabled, it's another thing for Medicare to be for everybody," Williams told me. "There's going to need to be Medicare reform, but I'm not suggesting we need to eliminate Medicare."

From 1984 to 1993, Williams held a number of positions in the Reagan and George H.W. Bush administrations, including deputy assistant secretary at Treasury and assistant secretary of education. He then worked as a lawyer in the private sector and was appointed by Governor George W. Bush to the Texas railroad commission, which regulates the oil, gas, and mining industries. Since his appointment in 1999, he's won statewide election to the commission three times and developed an expertise in energy policy. After ticking off statistics on wind and coal power in one recent speech, Williams began talking about the benefits of nuclear power. "If the French can figure it out, surely we can," he said.

Williams's good nature and wonkishness don't fit the stereotype of the tea party activist. But then according to conventional wisdom, Williams, who was born in 1953 and grew up in the segregated South, is supposed to be a Democrat.

The son of public school teachers, Williams lived in Texas until high school, when he attended a boarding school run by Benedictine monks in Colorado. At the University of Southern California he was a hurdler. "I was anything but a conservative" back then, Williams told me. He cast his first vote for George McGovern

John McCormack is deputy online editor of The Weekly Standard.

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in 1972 and served as president of the black student union at USC law school. By the early 1980s, however, Williams was a conservative Republican.

While he credits his parents and his Catholic faith for instilling a "conservative value system" in him, the thinkers who most influenced his political evolution are Milton Friedman and Thomas Sowell. "Even though I didn't think of myself as a conservative, I was always reading. I was always examining my own thoughts," Williams says. Friedman's *Free to Choose* helped him realize that the welfare state played a big role in keeping the poor and vulnerable from succeeding. And Sowell was "central" to him. "It was important to me," Williams explains, not only to find affirmation for "my own thoughts and thinking and in many ways to expand my understanding of these values and principles, but to get it from somebody that looked like me."

"People would say, 'Someone who looks like you cannot think what you think,'" says Williams. "That rarely happens nowadays."

Those attacks may revive once the Senate race heats up in Texas. Williams is the "Democrat party's worst nightmare," says DeMint. The Democrats do not want an impressive minority Republican on the national stage, and they may play the race card.

At the same time, Williams acknowledges that his race creates an opening for him to "have a conversation with other African Americans." He insists, though, "We've got to go beyond symbolism to real solutions."

"I would much prefer the storyline be 'consistent, courageous, conservative from Texas comes to Washington,'" he says. "The real story is not the one of race. The real story is that you've got a new Republican who's going to rally the next generation of Americans around conservative solutions." ♦

Back to the Future

British anti-Semitism returns—with a vengeance.

BY GABRIEL SCHOENFELD

Like cancer, ideas can metastasize. In 2007, John Mearsheimer and Stephen Walt—the former a professor at the University of Chicago, the latter at Harvard—came out with *The Israel Lobby and U.S. Foreign Policy*. A "situation [that] has no equal in American history" had arisen, they wrote in the book (and in a paper bearing the same title posted on Harvard's website). A domestic pressure-lobby—a body mostly comprising "American Jews making a significant effort in their daily lives to bend U.S. foreign policy so that it advances Israel's interests"—had accumulated "unmatched power" and was using it to "skew" the American political system for its own narrow ends. Among other things, the Jewish lobby had used its "stranglehold" on Congress and "manipulation" of the mass media to propel the United States into war in Iraq.

> Writing in the 'Independent,' Oliver Miles, Great Britain's former ambassador to Libya, has unearthed 'facts' about the distinguished historians Sir Martin Gilbert and Sir Lawrence Freedman that he says are 'not usually mentioned in the mainstream British and American media': Both, he writes, 'are Jewish.'

Mearsheimer and Walt provoked a raging controversy, but apart from a few pockets in the universities and on the far left and right (the white supremacist David Duke was among their most enthusiastic endorsers), the book was mostly given short shrift. Reviewing *The Israel Lobby* in the *New York Times*, Leslie Gelb, former head of the Council on Foreign Relations, expressed dismay at the "puzzlingly shoddy scholarship" that led Mearsheimer and Walt to "fuel, inadvertently, . . . the fires of anti-Semitism."

But if the respectable center dismissed the book in the United States, matters stand quite differently abroad. Before their book was published, Mearsheimer and Walt tried to peddle a shorter version, but found no takers. The article wound up appearing in the *London Review of Books* in 2006. The locale was not an accident. The soil in Great Britain was fertile for their thesis. Today, three years later, we can see some of its fruits.

An official inquest is now under way in London into the decisions that led Tony Blair's government to join with the United States in going to war in Iraq. On the five-member board of inquiry sit Sir Martin Gilbert and Sir Lawrence Freedman, both distinguished historians and students of warfare. But their scholarly credentials are not what is today garnering attention.

Writing in the *Independent*, Oliver Miles, Great Britain's former ambassador to Libya, has unearthed "facts" about the two men that he says are "not usually mentioned in the mainstream British and American media": Both, he writes, "are Jewish." This detail of their background, says Miles, threatens to undercut the credibility of the inquest: "Membership should not only be balanced; it should be seen to be balanced."

Gabriel Schoenfeld is a senior fellow at the Hudson Institute and a resident scholar at the Witherspoon Institute. His Necessary Secrets: National Security, the Media, and the Rule of Law *is due out next year.*

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In the same newspaper, the columnist Richard Ingrams called Miles's comments "helpful." The Iraq war, after all, was "initiated . . . by a group of influential American neocons . . . nearly all of whom were ardent Zionists." Given the panel's composition, the question arises of whether it will "investigate or even refer to the U.S. neocons and their links to Israel?" In other words, can Jews be trusted to investigate themselves?

Anti-Semitism has deep roots in England. In the 12th century, many of the country's Jews were put to the sword in a wave of massacres. The 13th century began with the introduction of the yellow badge, the mandatory marking that Jews were compelled to wear, and ended with the mass expulsion of the Jews.

Fast forward to the 20th century. In its first half, anti-Semitism was rampant among the upper classes. It also thrived in the gutter. Oswald Mosley's British Union of Fascists—the "blackshirts"—drew fully a quarter of the vote in London's 1937 municipal elections.

Today, Britain is awash with hatred of Jews carried in by followers of radical Islam who have found a congenial home in which to preach their genocidal doctrines. British soccer fans—where so many of the country's violent dregs are concentrated—have never been shy about giving voice to neo-Nazi slogans. Anti-Semitic incidents in the first six months of 2009 alone—vandalism, hate mail, and direct violent attacks on Jews—already exceeded the entire number for 2008 and reached a level not seen since such statistics began to be compiled in 1984.

Both the soccer hooligans, the Muslim fanatics, and the perpetrators of violence are situated on the fringe. In the post-World War II era, the British establishment was resistant to the most blatant forms of a prejudice severely discredited by the scope of German atrocities committed in its name. To the extent it remained visible, it typically took the form of phantasmagorical demonization of the state of Israel.

In the direct assault on Gilbert and Freedman a corner has been turned. The old prewar brand of British anti-Semitism has reared its head. It is in this climate that Britain's Channel 4 broadcast a documentary "investigation" of Britain's own "pro-Israel Lobby." This exposé examines what is said to be the extraordinary power of organized Jewry: "who they are, how they are funded, how they work and what influence they have, from the key groups to the wealthy individuals who help bankroll the lobbying." With shades of the Protocols of the Elders of Zion and shades of Mearsheimer-Walt, the program conveyed a picture of a nefarious conspiracy to plunge Britain into war in Iraq.

Voices in the Jewish community have expressed outrage at the documentary. The *Times* of London has denounced Ambassador Miles's remarks about Gilbert and Freedman as "extraordinary and disgraceful." But the *Times*'s editorial declined to call the comments anti-Semitic, labeling them instead a "snide attack and irrelevant innuendo." On the heels of this episode comes an astonishing ruling from Great Britain's newly created high court holding that an Orthodox Jewish school is guilty of "discrimination" for insisting that matrilineal descent—a core precept of Judaism—determines who is a Jew and eligible to enroll. This not only tells Jews, laments the columnist Melanie Phillips in the *Spectator*, "that the state will not accept their own decision about who is or is not a member of their own community but uniquely stigmatises them for doing so." Anti-Semitism is playing offense in Great Britain and those alarmed by it are in a crouch.

Graffito on a pavement in north London, 2008

ASSOCIATED PRESS / COMMUNITY SECURITY TRUST

Writing not long after World War II, George Orwell noted that "prejudice against Jews has always been pretty widespread in England," but the depredations of Hitler had caused a lull in public expression of such sentiments. During the war, many came to realize that "this is not a time to throw stones at the Jews." But even though a taboo had set in, this hardly altered underlying sentiments: "Many people who would perish rather than admit to anti-Semitic feelings," wrote Orwell, are nonetheless "secretly prone to them."

Times have changed. Mearsheimer and Walt's poison is doing its work, and the secret feelings are no longer so secret. Indeed, when it comes to Great Britain's small Jewish community—some 300,000 souls in a country of 61 million—the soccer hooligans and the intellectual and media elite are increasingly united in their loutishness. ♦

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It Can Happen Here

America's "homegrown" terrorism was made in South Asia. BY STEPHEN SCHWARTZ

In the past year, exposure of significant jihadist recruitment inside the United States has left Americans worried that "homegrown terrorism" may become a serious threat. Eight years after the atrocities of September 11, 2001, media and government appear stunned by the upsurge of jihad incidents in the United States, including two lethal attacks. The Fort Hood massacre on November 5, for which an Army psychiatrist, Nidal Hasan, has been charged with 13 deaths, has been followed by two more cases.

On December 9, five college-age Muslims from northern Virginia were arrested in Pakistan. They were allegedly headed for terror training camps, and were detained along with Khalid Chaudhry, father of the apparent leader of the younger enthusiasts, Umer Farooq Chaudhry.

Then, on December 14, a filing by federal prosecutors charged that David Coleman Headley, a Pakistani-American businessman from Chicago whose birth name is Daood Gilani, was complicit in the terror assault that killed nearly 170 people in Bombay last year. Headley and an associate, Tahawwur Rana, had been arrested in October, accused of conspiring to blow up *Jyllands-Posten*, the Danish newspaper that published the "Muhammad cartoons" in 2005.

A connection between the arrests in Pakistan and the Chicago investigation may be demonstrated. But these episodes are just part of a daunting list over the past year. Of almost 30 Islamist terror schemes uncovered on U.S. soil since 9/11, 10 came in 2009. They included:

- a plan to attack military aircraft and synagogues in New York (four men arrested in May),
- the fatal shooting of an Army recruiter and wounding of another in Little Rock in June,
- the North Carolina plot to wage jihad in various countries (eight men charged in July),
- a conspiracy to plant bombs in New York (prevented by apprehension of the accused, an Afghan national from Denver, in September),
- an attempted bombing at an Illinois courthouse, also in September,
- an intended assault on a shopping center in Massachusetts, foiled in October,
- and a firefight later that same month in Detroit between FBI agents and radicals bent on establishing an Islamist enclave ruled by sharia law in the United States.

Following the arrests of the six Virginians (counting the father) in Pakistan, American Islamist organizations with extensive records of radical advocacy affirmed their intense desire to assist the authorities in suppressing extremism. The Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR) proudly announced on December 9 that it had been told by parents of the five youths that they were missing, and that CAIR had then informed the FBI and assisted the bureau in its handling of the matter.

Haris Tarin, an official of the Muslim Public Affairs Council (MPAC), another prominent radical group, stood on the podium at the Washington press conference where CAIR's national executive director, Nihad Awad, made this claim. Tarin added, "Any radicalization that exists is a major problem that we must [address] head on." Mahdi Bray of the Muslim American Society (MAS), also included in the press conference, was less ameliorative, declaring that Muslim young people "are not to be characterized as terrorist suspects. . . . They are indeed America's brightest prospects."

The CAIR and MPAC statements have been interpreted by some observers as a turning point for these groups. But don't hold your breath. None of these blandishments are new. If the rhetoric of CAIR and MPAC suddenly seems more determined, it is most likely because they are profoundly frightened. A wave of panic swept the American Muslim community after the Fort Hood attack. These same groups have spent decades creating a milieu sympathetic to jihadists among American Sunni Muslims. CAIR has served as a front for Hamas; MPAC's executive director, Salam Al-Marayati, took to the airwaves in Los Angeles on the afternoon of September 11, 2001, to argue that Israel was a logical target for suspicion. It is difficult to imagine that they will now turn around and break with the ideology to which they have dedicated so much energy.

Why has jihadism in this country grown so much that a group of students might go to Pakistan intending war against the U.S.-led forces in Afghanistan? The most convincing explanation links the demographics of American Islam to the shift of the main terror zone from Iraq to South Asia.

According to CAIR itself, the plurality of Muslims attending mosque services in America are South Asian by birth or ethnicity, and make up at least a third of all American Muslims. Most of these have Pakistani roots; some are Indian, others are Afghan or Bangladeshi. Ethnic Pakistani and Indian functionaries and activists are

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the backbone of radical Islam in the United States. To further the cause of Muslim extremism here and in Great Britain, Wahhabis in Saudi Arabia provide the money, and the Egyptian-based Muslim Brotherhood furnishes the literature. But South Asians handle the organizational work.

Aside from the leaders of CAIR and MPAC, who are Arab in origin, and a handful of African Americans like Mahdi Bray of MAS, South Asians account for most of the Muslim radicals who have attained prominence here over the last few years. Muzammil Siddiqi, the former president of the Islamic Society of North America, was born in India. He is remembered for his avowal on October 28, 2000, at an anti-Israel "Jerusalem Day" rally in Washington: "America has to learn . . . if you remain on the side of injustice, the wrath of God will come." Sayyid M. Syeed, former secretary general of the same organization, was born in Kashmir. Agha Saeed, national chairman of the American Muslim Alliance, an Islamist political action committee, was born in Quetta, Pakistan, where bombings and assassinations have become common. The list may be extended much further.

Why should South Asian Muslims in America be any more susceptible than Arab or other Muslims to recruitment for armed combat? Palestinians and Lebanese Muslims living in America have had little incentive to contribute more than money to the terrorist cause. The recipients of their donations, Hamas and Hezbollah, have plenty of foot soldiers in their own neighborhood. Iraqi Muslims residing here were divided by the overthrow of Saddam Hussein, with most of them supporting it, but even when they opposed the U.S.-led intervention, they also had scant motivation to go and fight in Iraq.

But once the U.S.-led coalition effectively won the war in Iraq, the top priority for global jihadism shifted to Afghanistan and Pakistan. Pakistan is much easier for prospective combatants to reach than Iraq was. And Pakistanis are different: While Arab jihadists are aggrieved at the rulers of their countries of origin, sentiment among Pakistanis in America reflects the involvement of Pakistan's rulers in jihadism. Just as pro-Taliban elements have captured leading positions in the Pakistani Army and intelligence service (ISI), Pakistani Sunni culture in America is saturated with radicalism.

Pakistani Muslim extremists, whether involved with the Taliban or not, and whether living in Pakistan or abroad, are filled with resentment of India over Kashmir, enraged at Washington for, so far, preventing the collapse of the Afghan government of Hamid Karzai, and twisted by a perverse pride at Islamabad's possession of nuclear weapons. These attitudes are pervasive among Pakistani Sunnis in America and have empowered Pakistan-based jihadist movements with the United States.

One such element, the clandestine Lashkar-e-Taiba (Army of the Righteous or LeT) operated the "North Virginia paintball jihad" network exposed in 2003, eleven of whose members were convicted of weapons and other offenses. LeT, an al Qaeda auxiliary, carried out the Bombay horrors last year. LeT guided the abovementioned David Coleman Headley, who had legally changed his name to facilitate target-scouting visits to India. When the five Virginia youths and one parent now held in Pakistan attempted to sign up for terror training there, they approached groups allied with LeT.

The Islamic Circle of North America (ICNA) is another larger and public formation of South Asian radical Muslims. Of the Northern Virginians recently arrested in Pakistan, three shared a Pakistani background, one was culturally Eritrean, one Ethiopian, and one was Egyptian-American. The mosque they attended in Fairfax County is the "ICNA Islamic Center."

ICNA is a front for Jamaat-e-Islami (JI), the most powerful Islamist movement in Pakistan. ICNA is organized in paramilitary fashion and imposes discipline and tasks on its members. Its top leader, Zahid Bukhari, is designated its "ameer" or "commander." Its goal, as stated on its website (icna.org/about-icna) is "the establishment of Islam in all spheres of life." Mission work, or *dawah*, "has always been the top priority of ICNA."

ICNA's extensive literature distribution efforts include the talks and writings of Abul Ala Maududi, founder of JI, on "the Islamic social order." Maududi was the most prominent theorist of radical Islam in modern South Asian history. ICNA outreach also includes a "Jihad FAQ" in which—dispensing with the usual evasions found in such materials—ICNA defines jihad as "collective armed self-defense, as well as retribution against tyranny, exploitation, and oppression." Furthermore, the same document distinguishes armed jihad from terrorism as follows: "Jihad, when the need arises, is declared openly, while terrorism is committed secretly." Regardless of the absurdity of the latter distinction, since 9/11 and other acts of Islamist terror are anything but secret, the five youths and one parent detained in Pakistan were allegedly on their way to fight American and other coalition soldiers in Afghanistan. Jihad, as ICNA defines it, was their motive.

It should be noted that ICNA also expressed a terse willingness to assist the U.S. authorities in the case of the six held in Pakistan but at the same time condemned the increase in U.S. troops sent to Afghanistan. The five young men and one father, in short, were products of a communal environment imported into America, based on a foreign ideology financed from abroad by bloodthirsty extremists.

Jihadism in America, then, is not really "homegrown." It is as alien to America as were the Soviet-controlled Communists and the pro-Nazi German American Bund. The only answer to it is a complete cutoff of financial and organizational links between such entities in the United States and their overseas masters, as well as other legal measures to end their subversive efforts. ♦

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The Real Gitmo

What I saw at America's best detention facility for terrorists

By Thomas Joscelyn

Guantánamo Bay, Cuba

Shortly after 5 A.M., a detainee with an uneven voice sings the call to prayer. After a few bars, a second detainee joins in by sounding out another hymn.

"That's unusual," a tower guard who looks bored after a few months on the job remarks. "Usually, just one of them does it."

Detainees assemble in a corner of the camp and begin praying. Others pace back and forth in front of their cells with prayer beads in hand. For several minutes all is quiet—eerily so. Some of the world's most dangerous terrorists lurk just a short distance from our perch atop a guard tower, but you would never know it.

Welcome to Camp 4 at the Guantánamo Bay detention facility in Cuba.

The iconic images of Gitmo are not photos of Camp 4, however. The pictures that have captured the world's imagination are of detainees shackled on bended knee in bright orange jumpsuits with their eyes and ears covered. Those pictures were taken more than seven and a half years ago at Camp X-Ray, in the long corridor that runs down the middle of the camp.

The iconic Gitmo pictures, of shackled detainees in bright orange jumpsuits with their eyes and ears covered, were taken in 2002 at Camp X-Ray. Today the site is overrun with weeds and grass.

Today that corridor is overrun with weeds and unruly grass, and the rest of the camp is in no better state of repair. Camp X-Ray housed "war on terror" detainees for just four months, from January to April 2002. It has long since been abandoned. Banana rats, which look like some mutant combination of possum and rat, now hang from the cages that once housed the detainees. Gone, too, are the orange jumpsuits. They have been replaced by tan, white, and other neutral-colored clothing. During my multi-day tour of Guantánamo Bay, one official tells me that some journalists from Turkey wanted to take pictures of the detainees in their bright orange jumpsuits. When this official explained the detainees no longer wear those outfits, the Turkish reporters asked if a detainee could be dressed up in one for the photos as that is what their readers expect to see.

The story is emblematic of the disconnect between life at Guantánamo as it is today, and the Guantánamo of popular mythology. It is the latter that is the basis for the Obama administration's decision to close the detention facilities there.

As one of his first acts in office, President Obama ordered Guantánamo shuttered by January 2010. He has since conceded that his administration will not meet that goal. But both he and his team remain committed to the task. The chief rationale they offer is that Guantánamo has so tarnished America's image that it has become a major recruiting tool for al Qaeda. During a press conference last week, White House press secretary Robert Gibbs said that al Qaeda's senior leaders have referred to Guantánamo some 32 times in their recruitment videos since 2001. Gibbs implied that this is a lot. It isn't. Al Qaeda refers to the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, as well as the existence of Israel, as reasons to wage jihad far more frequently in its propaganda.

Gibbs pointed to the fact that senior al Qaeda leaders referred to Guantánamo four times in 2009 alone. Gibbs did not specify which messages he had in mind, but Zawahiri's August 5 tape, entitled "The Facts of Jihad and the Lies of the Hypocrites," is a typical example of al Qaeda's Gitmo-related propaganda. According to a 26-page translation published online by the NEFA Foundation, Zawahiri mentioned Guantánamo five times. By way of comparison, words related to "Iraq" and "Afghanistan" appear more than 70 times each. The words "Israel" and "Israelis" appear 39 times. The word "Zionist" appears another four times—in the context of an imagined American-Zionist conspiracy

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The long corridor running down the middle of Camp X-Ray as it looks today

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

against the Muslim world. (According to Ayman al-Zawahiri, by the way, Obama is himself a participant in this conspiracy.) And the words "Jew," "Jewish," and "Jewishness" appear another 12 times.

Guantánamo has simply never been a major part of al Qaeda's recruitment strategy. But even if it were and we closed it, the terror masters would simply find the next pretext for justifying their acts. After all, if we are to close Guantánamo because al Qaeda objects to it, then why not abandon America's entire foreign policy agenda?

Nonetheless the White House presses on with closing Gitmo—even in the face of substantial controversy.

This past week, the administration confirmed that it had selected an underutilized correctional center in the town of Thomson, in northwest Illinois, as the new home for up to 100 Gitmo detainees. A letter to Illinois governor Pat Quinn announced the administration's plan for the federal government to buy the prison in Thomson and rebuild one section of it to make the facility even more secure than America's "supermax" prison in Colorado—where several convicted terrorists are currently housed. This assurance is intended to assuage any concerns over the government's ability to safely detain the Gitmo detainees on U.S. soil.

Ironically, however, most of the roughly 210 detainees still held at Guantánamo are not in supermax-type facilities at all. At least 70 percent live in communal settings like Camp 4. They can play soccer, basketball, or foosball; exercise on elliptical equipment; and consort with their fellow detainees for up to 20 hours per day in the outdoor recreation area. They can take art classes or learn English. And while tensions flare every now and again, life in Camp 4 is generally calm. Camp officials prefer that the detainees live in this type of setting. It's easier on the guards and everyone else involved. As the commander of Camp 4 explains, the detainees have to "do something really bad" to get locked up in one of the more secure facilities.

The detainees have access to several satellite television channels and, as one DoD handout notes, a library consisting of "more than 14,000 books, magazines, and DVDs in 18 languages." During a visit to the library, I noticed a few copies of the poetry of Rumi—a 13th-century Sufi mystic whose writings explore deeply spiritual, ethereal topics. Rumi's view of the world is diametrically opposed to that of al Qaeda's jihadists. He searched for the universal deity who he believed resided in us all, regardless of race or creed. Jihadists, on the other hand, believe they are compelled to war against anyone who dares to oppose their intolerant beliefs.

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I ask the head librarian, "Do you get many requests for Rumi's books?"

With a slight chuckle she replies, "No, we don't get many requests for him. They aren't too interested in Rumi."

Oddly, the detainees are interested in many aspects of Western culture. Harry Potter is very popular, and with each new movie that comes out the detainees request more of J.K. Rowling's books.

"Everything you know about out there, they know about in here," the librarian says. That includes news events. In addition to satellite television, most of the detainees have access to three newspapers—two from the Muslim world and *USA Today*. The papers are censored, but only to remove any material that the detainees may find lewd, such as advertisements showing a man and woman kissing.

A while back, one detainee smashed a television set when he saw a woman's bare arms during a broadcast of a soccer match. In response, camp officials bolted down the televisions and put protective plastic casings around them. They have also gone out of their way to make sure that the detainees are not exposed to any other material they may find objectionable. For example, the nondescript faces of the foosball table's characters have been chipped off so that the detainees will not be offended by any hint of idolatry.

It is also surprising to learn the identity of some of the terrorists currently housed in the open-air facilities of Camp 4. Mohammed al-Qahtani, who was slated to be the 20th hijacker on September 11, 2001, reportedly lives here. There is little chance that the Obama administration will release al-Qahtani, despite all of the controversy surrounding the methods used during his interrogations. (Al-Qahtani was unquestionably subjected to humiliating and degrading treatment during the early days of Guantánamo.) The public outrage would simply be too great. So, it is likely that al-Qahtani will be transferred to the new facility in Illinois—or some other similarly secure facility in the United States—and such terrorists will undoubtedly pine for their days in Cuba once they are locked away in one of America's more severe correctional facilities.

An Italian journalist who accompanies me throughout much of the tour says that two Tunisian detainees who were recently transferred from Guantánamo to Italy to await trial are probably very upset right about now. They are being held in a maximum-security prison in Milan that he describes as "hell" compared with Gitmo. The Italian gentleman tells me this right after we tour the food-preparation facilities. There we found that the detainees are offered six types of meals, totaling between 5,000 and 6,000 calories, daily. In their more candid moments, the detainees complain to camp personnel that it is difficult for them to claim they have been "tortured" when they have pot bellies.

Not all of the facilities at Guantánamo are like Camp 4, of course. Camp 5 is a maximum-security facility for detainees who refuse to be compliant. (A detainee is deemed to be compliant if he generally obeys orders and does not threaten the guards or others. Compliance does not hinge on the detainee cooperating with interrogators.) Echoing his counterpart at Camp 4, the commander of Camp 5 says that the ultraviolent individuals kept in his camp have "done something really bad" to warrant segregation from the communal areas of Guantánamo. Personnel at Camp 5 say that the detainees' abuse of guards is so frequent that they would not even venture a guess as to how many instances occur in any given week.

Camp 6 was built as a medium-security facility, and some of its cell blocks offer communal-style living. It is used as a step-down facility where detainees who are in the process of proving that they can be more compliant are placed prior to returning to the more permissive environment of Camp 4. Some detainees, however, choose a different path. Our tour of Camp 6 was cut short when an undisclosed "incident" occurred.

There are other detention facilities at Guantánamo that we do not tour. Camps 1, 2, and 3 were built as a replacement for Camp X-Ray, and the detainees were moved there in April 2002. Those camps are mostly vacant today as they, in turn, were replaced by Camps 4, 5, and 6 beginning in February 2003.

Then, there is the mysterious Camp 7. Throughout the tour of Guantánamo, I jokingly pester the military guides about Camp 7 because, quite frankly, I really want to see it. Camp 7 was opened in 2006 when the Bush administration relocated the "high value detainees" from the CIA's so-called "black sites" to Guantánamo. Among its current residents are the five September 11 co-conspirators, including al Qaeda mastermind Khalid Sheikh Mohammed, who the Obama administration has pledged to bring to New York for a federal trial.

For many New Yorkers, it is deeply unsettling to think of these al Qaeda supervillains standing trial just blocks away from where their henchmen killed thousands of Americans. It is more unsettling when you realize that even here at Guantánamo, a highly secure military detention facility in the middle of the Atlantic, they are kept segregated from the rest of the detainee population. I never do get to see Camp 7. The military personnel who escort me around the island all insist that they do not know where it is located. I believe them—that is just how secure Camp 7 is.

The more you learn about the real Guantánamo, the more the Obama administration's decision to move any of the detainees to the continental United States seems entirely unnecessary. The detainees probably can be safely housed on domestic soil, but why take the risk?

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Detainees in the open yard at Camp 4

BRENNAN LINSLEY-POOL / GETTY IMAGES

What's more: The facilities that are required already exist here in Cuba. Camps 5 and 6—the maximum and medium security facilities that house detainees who refuse to be compliant—were modeled after existing correctional facilities in the Midwest. Both camps (like the rest of Guantánamo) are maintained in accordance with the Geneva Conventions. These camps have more than enough capacity to continue to hold the detainees the Obama administration now wants to transfer to the United States. And even Attorney General Eric Holder conceded after visiting the camps earlier this year that Guantánamo is "well-run" with no sign of detainee mistreatment.

Why, then, is the Obama administration determined to close Guantánamo and reinvent the wheel in Thomson, Illinois? The answer has everything to do with anachronistic perceptions and an anti-military mythology that dates from the four months when Camp X-Ray was operational.

The only reason Camp X-Ray still stands today is that a U.S. court has ordered the military to keep it erect. There are active investigations into allegations of abuse, and the courts want the facility accessible until those investigations are closed. The court's order has not, however, stopped the relentless march of time, and it is difficult to see how any real investigative work could be done here today.

As we wade through the overgrown vegetation, our military guide points to the piping in the back of one of the cages. It is nothing more than a round hole protruding from a horizontal pipe running from one side of the cage to the other.

"The pipes were put in to give the detainees a urinal," she explains. "They had buckets too, but the detainees would throw the contents of the buckets at the guards."

The pipes were supposed to mitigate the detainees' penchant for throwing "feces cocktails"—as they are known at Gitmo—but it did not work. The detainees used whatever was at hand to lash out. Some still do to this day—despite the fact they all have access to modern plumbing.

The original doors to the cages were poorly thought-out as well. They swung back and forth, meaning that defiant detainees could crash the doors into the guards as they entered the cages. That was rectified after a new type of door, which only opened inward, was installed.

Though Camp X-Ray is a shell of its former self, it is clear that even in its heyday it was a primitive facility. The whole place has an ad hoc feel to it. The camp was originally built to house Cuban and Haitian migrants who had committed criminal acts in the mid-1990s, but was closed in 1996. It was rebuilt so quickly for its new mission in late 2001 that the fencing from a nearby sports field had to be repurposed during construction. The makeshift Camp X-Ray is symbolic, in many ways, of the military's scramble to deal with the detainees it was responsible for holding.

As we walk around the camp, I can't help but think back to January 2002, before "Guantánamo" had ever become a

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The television room at Camp 4

MANDEL NGAN-POOL / GETTY IMAGES

buzzword. The "war on terror" was just a few months old, and the United States had yet to capture any of the most senior al Qaeda leaders. At the time, we had little intelligence on our terrorist enemies. Desperate to understand the designs of our jihadist foes, the U.S. military went about trying to figure out what its detainees, who did not wear military uniforms or make their "rank" easy to discern, knew about al Qaeda's and the Taliban's operations.

Even though this was a difficult process, the intelligence that was collected has been invaluable. It has directly supported combat operations in Afghanistan. It has deepened the military's understanding of how terrorists are recruited and trained, and how they construct bombs (including improvised explosive devices that are used to kill American servicemen in Afghanistan). It has shed light on how terrorists are shuttled around the world and how they are financed. This intelligence has contributed greatly to America's overall understanding of the global terror network in numerous ways.

But in the public debate over closing Gitmo, the intelligence garnered has rarely been discussed, even though thousands of pages of documents detailing what the government has learned have been declassified and released online. These documents, consisting mainly of files created during the detainees' combatant status review tribunal and administrative review board hearings, are readily available on both the DoD's and the *New York Times*'s websites. For the most part, the media just ignore them.

While the intelligence collected has been given short shrift, there has been no lack of stories about abuse that allegedly occurred during interrogations. The early efforts at Camp X-Ray were certainly clumsy. The first detainees did not want to volunteer any information, so the military forced them into involuntary interrogations. As our military guide explained during the tour, the detainees were strapped to wooden carts and wheeled over to one of three interrogation huts just outside the holding pens. That spectacle must have exacerbated tensions as it occurred in plain view of the detainees.

The temptation is to imagine that interrogations at Guantánamo are performed in a similar fashion today. They are not. Rear Admiral Thomas Copeman III, who took over as the commander of Joint Task Force Guantánamo in June, told me that there have not been any involuntary interrogations here in approximately four years. The only way a detainee is interrogated is if he volunteers to be so. Surprisingly, between 80 and 90 detainees have volunteered to attend an interrogation during the past year alone.

The detainees do not always give up real information. Sometimes they just want the treats that are given as a reward for their nominal participation in the interrogation sessions. (The interrogators offer incentives, such as extra candy bars, for the detainees to come to the interrogation rooms.) If the detainees don't cooperate, they are simply brought back to their camp. But even using this comparatively stress-free approach to interrogations the

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U.S. military is still acquiring important intelligence. The intelligence community consistently finds a significant amount of value in new Gitmo intelligence.

The military's detention policies have changed significantly too. During our tour of Camp X-Ray, our guide recounted how the first riot at Guantánamo broke out. It started when a guard mistakenly thought a detainee was being disobedient after he failed to comply with an order. In reality, the detainee was praying and refused to break prayer to respond to the guard. When the guard entered the detainee's cage and disrupted the ritual, the inmates thought their religion was being disrespected and a riot broke out. This type of mistake was avoidable, and to the military's credit, it has spent a considerable amount of time and money learning from its mistakes.

There have been further detainee uprisings. During one, the detainees used the blades from fans as weapons. The detainees themselves had requested the fans as a comfort item, but quite obviously had an ulterior motive in mind. That is how the dance here at Guantánamo works. It is a balancing act, and military officials must be constantly mindful of who it is they are dealing with.

The military has gone out of its way to accommodate the detainees' religious feelings. The nondescript faces of the foosball table's characters have been chipped off so that the detainees will not be offended by any hint of idolatry.

I talk with "Zak," a native Jordanian who has lived all over the world. For the last several years, he has been the chief detainee liaison. Zak is tasked with listening to the detainees' grievances and, when appropriate, trying to rectify them. It is a thankless job and he endures his share of abusive comments from the detainees. He also teaches the guards about the detainees' religion so they can avoid obvious miscommunication. This is a tricky task, to say the least, given the detainees' radical beliefs.

One of the more damaging myths about Guantánamo is that U.S. military personnel regularly and intentionally desecrate the Koran. But only a handful of instances of Koran abuse have ever been verified, and some of those instances were completely unintentional. In 2005, *Newsweek* reported that interrogators had flushed a detainee's copy down the toilet. This was not true. *Newsweek* retracted the story but only after it had sparked riots in the Muslim world. Zak says that while he does not know of any instances of U.S. military personnel disrespecting the Koran in such a manner, he has witnessed detainees doing so. One detainee ripped the pages out of his Koran and flushed them down his toilet in what was probably an act of rage or defiance, Zak says.

Knowing that the U.S. military will be roundly criticized for any hint of Koran desecration, the detainees play games with their holy books. A common practice, Zak says, is for the detainees to put their Korans in the middle of the floor of their cells, create a fuss, and then watch as the military guards try to avoid making any contact with Allah's word.

Zak also recounts one story in which a detainee claimed that a military guard had urinated on his Koran. When Zak inspected the detainee's copy, he noticed a perfect semicircle imprinted on its pages. Zak quickly deduced that the detainee had pressed his bottle of Gatorade against his Koran's pages to make it look as if it had been defiled. (Yes, the detainees get sports drinks.)

Another myth is that detainees who are on hunger strike are brutally force-fed. During a visit to the hospital, we're shown small pullout tables with a few nose tubes, several cans of *Ensure*, and other dietary supplements. The way the feeding works is for a long tube to be put through the detainee's nose down to his stomach. The dietary supplement is then poured through the tube. The detainees get to pick the flavor of the supplement that they ingest because even though they aren't swallowing the supplement they do get an after-taste. Butter pecan is their usual preference.

The detainees' lawyers describe the act of "force-feeding" as barbaric and tantamount to torture. Looking at the nose tubes, which are only slightly thicker than the average strand of spaghetti, it is clear that the "force-feeding is torture" tale, like so many others about Gitmo, is sheer nonsense. Admiral Copeman volunteered to be "force-fed" and calls it a "non-event." Copeman's predecessor did it for an entire week and had no problem maintaining his weight or regular exercise schedule. According to the medical personnel, some of the hunger strikers (not all) use their visits to the hospital area to eat full meals. It is a matter of pride for them to pretend that they remain committed to the cause in front of other detainees. Once they are out of sight, however, they scarf down real food.

Copeman has only been on the job for six months, so I ask him what his biggest adjustment has been. He says that he is not used to having a court give him an order. Copeman is referring, at least in part, to the habeas corpus decisions coming out of the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia. As a result of the Supreme Court's

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A military librarian distributing books to detainees at Camp 4

JOHN MOORE / GETTY IMAGES

Boumediene decision, the detainees have the right to challenge their detention in America's courts. If the executive branch does not challenge the courts' rulings, federal judges effectively decide whether or not the military can continue to hold detainees.

On one of the days I was at Gitmo, a Kuwaiti named Fouad al-Rabiah was sent back to his home country. D.C. District Court Judge Colleen Kollar-Kotelly had ordered that the United States release Rabiah. In her ruling, Kollar-Kotelly demonstrated disturbing ignorance about al Qaeda. She concluded, for example, that Rabiah had established his bona fides as a legitimate charity worker prior to his two suspicious trips to Afghanistan in 2001. Therefore, there was no reason to suspect that Rabiah had traveled to al Qaeda and Taliban country for nefarious reasons. In reality, the "charities" that Rabiah worked for are all known fronts for al Qaeda and have never pursued legitimate humanitarian objectives. This was just one of the many flaws in Kollar-Kotelly's ruling. Regardless, the military complied with her decision.

Unless Congress is able to overrule the Obama administration, in all likelihood, the Guantánamo detention facilities will be shuttered at some point in 2010. The Obama administration has spent too much political capital in pursuit of this cause to abandon it now. The president and his team are likely convinced that it is the right thing to do. But in justifying his decision to close Gitmo, President Obama has implicitly sided with those who have condemned the actions of our service men and women in Guantánamo.

When the president signed the executive order to close Gitmo in January 2009, he said that the message he was sending to the world "is that the United States intends to prosecute the ongoing struggle against violence and terrorism . . . in a manner that is consistent with our values and our ideals." His implication was that the many critics of Gitmo had a point: America deserved blame.

The U.S. military may have made mistakes at Gitmo, but it did so in the context of an extremely difficult situation. And it has taken extraordinary steps to rectify them and improve facilities that, as we should never forget, house men who are committed to an extreme ideology that justifies acts of mass terror.

As we leave the part of Guantánamo Bay that houses Camps 4, 5, and 6, we are driven through the security checkpoint one last time. I see a sign displaying the "value of the week." These signs are sprinkled around the exterior of the detention facilities and are a transparent attempt to boost troop morale, which senior camp officials say has sagged in the face of the relentless criticism.

The value this week is "Pride." The troopers who have served here should be proud. And I know that we should be proud of them. They have served their country honorably. ♦

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The EPA's Power Grab

The climate campaigners play their trump card, but it may turn out to be a joker

By Steven F. Hayward

The climate campaign, built step-by-step over the last 20 years, has reached its Waterloo. The Copenhagen conference that ended Friday was an exercise in political theater. It not only failed to produce a binding agreement, but the potential emissions curbs it endorsed fall far below what climate orthodoxy demands, while the proposed wealth transfer from rich nations to poor nations is a political non-starter. Back home, cap and trade legislation remains on life support, even though it has been significantly watered down so as to postpone real costs to consumers for a decade or more. In the midst of this gloom, the climate campaign has played its trump card in the United States: The Environmental Protection Agency formally announced on December 7 its intention to regulate greenhouse gases through the Clean Air Act.

That trump card, however, may turn out to be a joker.

The Clean Air Act (CAA), enacted in 1970 and last updated in 1990, is an abysmal policy mechanism for controlling greenhouse gases, and was never intended for this kind of problem. But the EPA's gambit is not about policy—it is all about politics. The EPA's grasp for dominion over greenhouse gases has been a long time in coming, starting as an effort to bring pressure on the Bush administration to relent in its opposition to a U.N.-led international climate treaty, and continuing under Obama as a means of pressuring Congress and the business community to support cap and trade.

The key antecedent to this gambit was a botched Supreme Court decision in 2007, *Massachusetts* v. *EPA*, in which a 5-4 majority (Justice Anthony Kennedy sided with the Court's four liberals) ruled that greenhouse gases like carbon dioxide were indeed "pollutants" under the capacious definitions of the Clean Air Act, thereby giving the EPA jurisdiction to regulate them without any legislative mandate from Congress.

Environmental groups had petitioned the EPA to regulate greenhouse gases under the Clean Air Act and had encouraged several states to ask for federal authority to impose their own regulations on automobile emissions. The Bush EPA took the position that it did not have the authority to regulate greenhouse gases, and would decline to regulate them even if it did have the legal authority. Once the Supreme Court ruled, however, the slippery slope logic of environmental law took over, making it inevitable that the EPA would eventually move to regulate greenhouse gases. In a nutshell, environmental statutes and case law have evolved so as to make federal judges into the sock puppets of environmentalists, and greens have become highly skilled in bringing lawsuits to compel federal agencies to do their bidding. (This explains, for example, the Bush administration's decision to list the polar bear as an endangered species.)

The EPA gambit has business groups in an uproar, but is this a case of crying wolf, in a mirror image of environmental alarms? Industry protested every version of the Clean Air Act (a Ford executive named Lee Iacocca predicted in 1970 that the CAA would shut down the entire American auto industry), and although the cost of reducing air pollution was not trivial (over $500 billion according to the EPA's likely underestimate), it has not decimated the American economy. In fact, on the surface the Clean Air Act appears to be the largest public policy success story of the last generation: The dramatic reduction in air pollution is greater in magnitude than the reduction in the crime rate in the 1990s or the fall in welfare rolls since welfare reform. You'd never know this from the media or the greens, who hate good environmental news as much as vampires hate garlic.

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The way we were: The Clean Air Act was quite successful with conventional air pollution.

GETTY IMAGES / B. ANTHONY STEWART / NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC

It is important to understand why the Clean Air Act worked on conventional air pollution so as to appreciate why it is an inappropriate policy tool for greenhouse gases—akin to wearing thick mittens to peel an onion. Greenhouse gases are not comparable to traditional forms of air pollution such as carbon monoxide, sulfur dioxide, lead, and ozone. Reducing conventional sources of air pollution was mostly a technological problem—such as removing lead from gasoline, improving combustion efficiency (a lot of air pollution came from evaporating or incompletely burned fuel), and capturing pollutants, as was done with "scrubbers" on coal-fired power plants to reduce sulfur dioxide. The EPA regulations might be excessively costly, but they imposed no constraint on the use of fuel or energy. To the contrary, the use of coal in the United States has doubled since the 1970s, while sulfur dioxide emissions from coal have been cut by about two-thirds. Likewise we have more than doubled our gasoline and diesel fuel consumption since 1970, but reduced auto and truck emissions more than two-thirds through reformulated fuel, catalytic converters, and better engine combustion technology. Emissions trading (cap and trade) has been one of the tools used to reduce sulfur dioxide emissions efficiently, but it is simpleminded in the extreme to suppose that just because sulfur dioxide and carbon dioxide both end in "dioxide," cap and trade will work exactly the same way for CO_2.

Carbon dioxide emissions are an energy use problem pure and simple, and not a byproduct problem like other forms of air pollution. As Ted Nordhaus and Michael Shellenberger, dissidents in the environmental movement, have written: "Global warming is as different from smog in Los Angeles as nuclear war is from gang violence." The only way to reduce CO_2 emissions is to burn a lot less fossil fuel—ultimately almost none if the ambitious target of climate orthodoxy is to be met (an 80 percent reduction by the year 2050). With the partial exception of still unproven and hugely expensive carbon sequestration for coal, there are no add-on technologies to remove carbon dioxide from fossil fuel combustion, and there is no such thing as "low-carbon" coal, gasoline, or natural gas (comparable to low-sulfur coal and diesel). The EPA can only reduce CO_2 by regulating fuel inputs in the economy—something it never did in regulating conventional air pollutants. In other words, this step promises to turn the EPA into an energy regulatory agency.

But differences between carbon dioxide and conventional air pollutants are only the beginning of the story.

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It is the peculiar way the Clean Air Act regulations operate that has business groups in an uproar now. There are several steps to the Clean Air Act process. Once a pollutant has been identified as harmful to human health, the next step is to determine its "safe," "health-based" maximum level. This will be a fascinating process to watch with CO_2. The current ambient level of CO_2 is about 390 parts per million (ppm). Climate orthodoxy per the Kyoto-Copenhagen process aims for CO_2 to reach no higher than 450 ppm. If the EPA adopted 450 ppm as the U.S. ambient standard, then no part of the country would be in violation, which would greatly complicate the task of justifying regulation. The EPA could still propose regulations for CO_2 under another feature of the Clean Air Act—"prevention of significant deterioration." More likely the EPA will arbitrarily designate an ambient CO_2 level below the current level of 390 ppm; lately the most vocal climate campaigners, such as former vice president Al Gore, have been claiming that 350 ppm is the safe level we must somehow return to.

As Ted Nordhaus and Michael Shellenberger, dissidents in the environmental movement, have written: 'Global warming is as different from smog in Los Angeles as nuclear war is from gang violence.'

The next step in the process is to designate specific "non-attainment" areas around the nation—that is, areas where ambient levels of pollution are higher than the health-based standard. Most major metropolitan areas were at one time designated a "non-attainment" area for one or more pollutants over the last 30 years. This is important because regulatory measures are then tailored to match local differences in sources of pollution. Texas and Louisiana, for example, have pollution profiles different from the rest of the country because of the heavy presence of petrochemical refining, while the Northeast has a pollution problem from coal-fired power plants in the Ohio valley, and California suffers mostly from car and truck emissions. But large parts of the nation—rural areas and sparsely populated states such as Wyoming and Montana—are with a few exceptions not subject to Clean Air Act regulation and permitting requirements. But in the case of CO_2, the EPA is likely to designate the entire country as a non-attainment area.

The Clean Air Act also includes an element of federalism that will either be swept away or made incoherent by CO_2 regulation. Under the act, each state is charged with developing its own State Implementation Plan (SIP), subject to EPA supervision and approval, for reducing air pollution, tailored to local conditions. Some states—California in particular—have extensive experience at this, while other states (Wyoming and Idaho, for example) have done little of this, and may now have to create new bureaucracies to comply. On the other hand, with the entire country designated as a CO_2 non-attainment zone, the EPA may decide to regulate directly and skip over the SIP process. But this will require a vast expansion of the EPA (not that the agency itself will be complaining).

Next, because there are so many more sources of CO_2 emissions than there are of conventional air pollution, the EPA's regulatory reach is certain to be much greater. There is already some funny business going on. The Clean Air Act authorizes the EPA to regulate stationary sources (buildings, factories, power plants, etc.) that generate as little as 250 tons of pollution per year. Two hundred and fifty tons is a lot if we are talking about emissions that cause ozone, but it is a tiny amount for carbon dioxide. A 70,000 square foot office building (the size of most small office buildings in Washington, D.C., for example) will meet that threshold, as will most fast-food restaurants and virtually all manufacturing facilities. Is such micromanagement of the U.S. economy by the EPA farfetched? Twenty years ago regulators in Los Angeles, facing the nation's worst ozone problem and looking to squeeze every possible emissions source no matter how small, considered a rule banning construction of drive-through windows at fast-food outlets on the theory that cars idling at the pickup windows emitted high amounts of ozone-forming chemicals. Improved auto technology made this rule unnecessary. The L.A. air district also considered banning barbecue lighter fluid, but manufacturers reformulated it to make it less volatile. These are the kinds of measures we can expect to make their appearance nationwide under an EPA regulatory regime for greenhouse gases; worse, it is easy to imagine the EPA mandating lighting fixtures, insulation retrofits, and thermostat controls on most buildings and small businesses.

The EPA is hip to this problem, and has announced that it would impose its new regulatory regime at a threshold of 25,000 tons of greenhouse emissions per year. This restraint will not survive the first lawsuit from the Sierra Club, since the Clean Air Act statute specifies the 250-ton threshold; eventually a federal judge will compel the EPA to enforce the law to the

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maximum extent allowed. But this raises another irony in this whole mess—the very litigation machine that has so far been the bread-and-butter of environmentalists could now throw lots of sand into the EPA's gears.

The Clean Air Act has always been a very slow-moving administrative process. Each step in this process—from the choice of the ambient air standard for CO_2, to each state's SIP, to the individual regulations the EPA promulgates—will be susceptible to legal challenge by industry (for being too harsh) or environmentalists (for being too lenient), followed by inevitable appeals by the losing side. For example, the Clinton EPA's proposal to make the ambient air standard for ozone and particle pollution much stricter in the late 1990s was held up in litigation for nearly a decade. Today's first graders may well be reading about the Copenhagen conference in the third edition of high school climate-history textbooks by the time EPA greenhouse gas regulations begin to take effect. But by then the "climate crisis," in the orthodox view, will be so far advanced that it will be too late.

At this point the transparent insincerity of the climate campaign becomes more obvious. The Waxman-Markey version of cap and trade includes a provision that would strip the EPA of authority to regulate greenhouse gases by means of the Clean Air Act—an obvious sop to the business community. Seldom do the greens give up a grant of power such as they were handed by the Supreme Court's *Massachusetts* v. *EPA* decision (it's the green version of the Brezhnev Doctrine). The Obama administration keeps insisting it doesn't want to regulate greenhouse gases through the cumbersome Clean Air Act, in hopes this will push cap and trade over the finish line as the "market-friendly" alternative. Business groups ought to take a "please don't throw me into that briar patch" attitude, however. The Clean Air Act method of regulating greenhouse gases has the political potential to turn every congressman into John Dingell—the fierce guardian of the auto industry against the EPA for the last 40 years. It is also possible that the EPA gambit may backfire in Congress in the short term. Many senators and House members may decide that it is preferable to let the EPA do the climate campaigners' dirty work, rather than cast another tough vote for cap and trade. This will be especially tempting, since many voters may not cotton on to the fact that Congress can easily remove the EPA's jurisdiction over greenhouse gases by amending the Clean Air Act—as that provision in the cap and trade bill shows. Indeed, House Republicans have already signaled their intention to turn up the heat on Democrats by introducing a "resolution of disapproval" of the endangerment finding, though they should go further and propose stripping the EPA entirely of its authority to regulate greenhouse gases under the Clean Air Act, perhaps saying that is the one part of the Waxman-Markey bill that merits support.

The greatest irony of the EPA's entry into the fray is that it may reopen the supposedly "settled" question of climate science itself, which has new salience because of the firestorm over the "climategate" scandal involving the leaked emails from the University of East Anglia. There is in addition a separate tale of leaked emails from the EPA itself that has received surprisingly little attention.

Designating carbon dioxide as a Clean Air Act "pollutant" involves a finding that CO_2 is a hazard to human health. Common sense suggests this is a stretch. Unlike ozone, which burns lung tissue and harms plant growth, or airborne lead, which harms brain development in children, human beings *exhale* carbon dioxide—800 pounds per person per year according to the EPA—and CO_2 is the primary nutrient for plant life on earth. Since the EPA can't make the case that CO_2 is toxic like other air pollution, it based its endangerment finding entirely on indirect or secondary effects, specifically the possibility of more deaths from heat waves, higher ozone levels (ozone tends to rise with temperature), more insect-borne diseases and allergies, and higher vulnerability to extreme weather events such as hurricanes and tornadoes. Each of these claims rests on dubious or contested scientific findings. In general, human health in the United States keeps improving. Deaths from heat waves in this country have been steadily declining. The EPA's own models project falling ozone levels for the next generation. Vector-borne disease rates (think malaria) correlate much more closely with wealth and poverty than with temperature, and recent research casts doubt on the super-hurricane scenarios.

Numerous critics pointed out these and other defects in the EPA's first draft of its endangerment finding released last spring, most notably the Cato Institute's Pat Michaels, who filed a 186-page critique with the EPA during the public comment period. The EPA brushed most of these comments aside in its 11-volume response with a self-assured, not to say royal, "We disagree." But perhaps the most potentially damaging critique of the EPA's science came from within the EPA itself, in the form of an 81-page analysis from career EPA employees Alan Carlin and John Davidson. Carlin and Davidson work for the EPA's in-house research unit known as the National Center for Environmental Economics (NCEE). They argued straightforwardly that "the EPA and many other agencies and countries have paid too little attention to the science of global warming," and went on to cite peer-reviewed studies pointing out the deficiencies and anomalies of the con-

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ventional climate-catastrophe narrative.

The EPA didn't condescend to discuss the substance of its outside critics' comments. To insiders Carlin and Davidson, the response amounted to, "Shut up, if you know what's good for you." Carlin and Davidson wanted to submit their analysis as part of the EPA's public comment process in March. Their boss, Al McGartland, head of the NCEE, said no, telling Carlin and Davidson by email "please do not have any direct communication with anyone outside NCEE on endangerment. There should be no meetings, emails, written statements, phone calls, etc." A few days later McGartland told Carlin that he would not submit Carlin's analysis to the EPA public comment process: "The time for such discussion of fundamental issues has passed for this round. The administrator and the administration has decided to move forward on endangerment, and your comments do not help the legal or policy case for this decision. . . . I can only see one impact of your comments given where we are in the process, and that would be a very negative impact on our office."

This is a deeply disingenuous response. The EPA never did engage in a fundamental internal discussion of fundamental issues. Ordinarily the EPA conducts its own scientific investigation to establish its endangerment findings, but in this case the EPA simply borrowed from the U.N.'s Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and the U.S. government's own Climate Change Science Program. Eight minutes after McGartland told Carlin that his analysis would have a "negative impact," he sent a followup email instructing Carlin, "I don't want you to spend any additional EPA time on climate change. No papers, no research etc., at least until we see what EPA is going to do with climate." McGartland then reminded Carlin that the budget for the NCEE had just been cut by 66 percent. There has been talk of eliminating the office altogether on account of the inconvenient economic truths it periodically generates from within the EPA citadel.

The Carlin/Davidson document and the emails were leaked to the Competitive Enterprise Institute in June, but attracted only scant media attention. In light of the scandal surrounding the East Anglia emails, however, the newly urgent demand for transparency in the climate science and policy process may shine unwelcome new light into the dark corners of EPA's politically driven agenda. There will certainly be new fodder for litigation challenging the EPA's endangerment finding, which will involve reopening basic questions of climate science to judicial review. What was "settled" is about to become unsettled. In other words, in hoping to use the EPA's Clean Air Act club to bully Congress into passing cap and trade, the climate campaign may have made its biggest blunder yet. ♦

Overkill by climate regulators? L.A. once considered banning drive-through windows.

NEWSCOM

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Resistance Is Futile

The triumph of the Eurocrats over the peoples of Europe.

By Andrew Stuttaford

Bliss was it in that dawn to be alive—at least if you were Valéry Marie René Georges Giscard d'Estaing. The one-term president of France was awarded the job in 2002 of chairing the convention responsible for designing a constitution for the European Union. He compared his fellow delegates—a dismal, handpicked, largely Eurofederalist claque—with America's Founding Fathers, and, splendidly *de haut en bas* (however tongue-in-cheek), told this self-important rabble that, in the "villages" they came from, statues would be put up in their honor—"on horseback" no less.

But that's not quite how it worked out. When the villagers saw the hideous blend of bureaucratic centralism, transnational control, political correctness, and daft pomposity that slithered out of Giscard's convention, they were none too impressed. The draft constitution staggered its way to approval in some EU countries, but was killed off by referenda in France and Holland in mid-2005.

Except that's not quite how it worked out. Properly speaking, those two defeats should have put a stake through the heart of the constitution. Instead the ratification process was frozen "for a period of reflection"—a dignified term for buying time to cook up a scheme to bypass the awkwardness of voter disapproval. The scheme was the Treaty of Lisbon.

It preserved the content of the draft constitution, but junked its form. The constitution that had been rejected was scrapped, but its essence was preserved under the guise of a series of amendments to the EU's existing treaties that smuggled in most of the changes which would once have been incorporated in Giscard's monstrosity. It was a stroke of genius. Dropping the "c" word minimized the legal or political risk that referenda might once again be required. It was also an insult. Neither Giscard nor the key architect of the new treaty, Germany's chancellor Angela Merkel, made any attempt to conceal their view that the substance of the constitution was alive and well.

Channeling Louis XIV, Nicolas Sarkozy ruled that France's disobedient voters would be denied any further say on the matter. No surprise there, but I like to think that Merkel's coup might have caused a few pangs in the ranks of Holland's rather more respectable Council of State (the government's highest advisory body). Maybe it did, but the august if pliable Dutchmen somehow felt able to determine that the new treaty did not contain enough "constitutional" elements to require a referendum. Meanwhile, Britain's shameless Labour government just brazened things out. Labour had been reelected in 2005 on the back of a manifesto that included the promise of a referendum should the United Kingdom be asked to sign up for a revived constitution. The Lisbon Treaty was, however, cooed Messrs Blair and Brown, something completely different. There would be no popular vote.

The EU may not be able to do much to hinder the United States directly, but, as its 'common' foreign (and, increasingly, defense) policy develops, there's a clear risk it will be at the expense of NATO.

In Ireland, though, significant changes to the EU's treaties require a constitutional amendment, and the Irish constitution can only be amended by referendum. The Irish government did not attempt to dodge its responsibilities. Nor did Irish voters. In June 2008, the Lisbon Treaty was voted down. As the treaty had to be ratified in each of the EU's 27 member states, the Irish snub should have finished it off. Except (you will be unsurprised to know) that's not quite how it worked out.

Within minutes of the Irish vote, the EU's top bureaucrat, Commission president José Barroso, announced that the treaty was not dead. When it comes to the European project, *no* does not mean *no*—as Danish and Irish voters had already discovered in the aftermath of their rejection of earlier EU treaties. Ratifications of Lisbon rolled in from elsewhere, the Irish government secured

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some placatory legal guarantees, setting the stage for a mulligan this October. In the event, however, the result of this second vote was determined not by the changes won by the Dublin government, but by the global financial meltdown, a blow that had brought Ireland's over-leveraged economy to its knees.

There was something almost refreshing in the lack of subtlety with which Barroso traveled to Limerick to announce—just weeks before the second referendum—that Brussels (in other words, the EU's conscripted taxpayers) would be spending 14.8 million euros to help workers at Dell's Irish plant find new jobs. In case anyone missed the point, Barroso also reminded his listeners that the European Central Bank had lent over 120 billion euros to the battered Irish banking system. Frazzled by financial disaster and fearful of the consequences of alienating their paymasters, Ireland's voters reversed their rejection of the Lisbon Treaty just a couple of weeks later.

Being a realist means knowing when to fold. In the wake of the Irish vote, a nose-holding, teeth-gritting Polish president committed his country to the treaty. This left the Czech Republic's profoundly Euroskeptic president, Václav Klaus, as the last holdout. If Klaus could delay signing the treaty (which had, awkwardly for him, already been approved by the Czech parliament) until after a likely Conservative victory in the upcoming British general election (due no later than next June), then the whole process could be brought to a halt. The Tories had vowed to withdraw the U.K.'s existing ratification and hold a referendum on the Lisbon Treaty before proceeding any further. Given most Britons' views (quite unprintable in a respectable publication), the result would have been to kill the treaty. The U.K. isn't Ireland. The U.K. isn't Denmark.

If, if, if . . .

It didn't take long for the blunt Klaus to dash those hopes: "The train carrying the treaty is going so fast and it's [gone] so far that it can't be stopped or returned, no matter how much some of us would want that."

Klaus signed the treaty on November 3. Shortly thereafter the EU's leaders began maneuvering to fill two new jobs: "president" (actually president of the European Council) and "foreign minister" (the latter will rejoice in the grandiloquent title of High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy). Following a couple of weeks of intrigue, backstabbing, and secretive quid pro quos, it was agreed the new president would be Herman van Rompuy—Belgium's prime minister and thus a man who knows a thing or two about unnatural unions. But the somewhat obscure van Rompuy (what Belgian prime minister is not?) is a world historical figure when compared with the woman who has become High Representative, a Brit by the name of Baroness Ashton of Upholland, a dull hack known—if at all—for her loyalty to the Labour party. The treaty finally came into force on December 1. The age of van Rompuy had begun.

Celebrating Irish voters' approval of the Lisbon Treaty, Dublin, October 3, 2009.

JULIEN BEHAL / PA WIRE / ASSOCIATED PRESS

Some commentators are presenting the emergence of the Belgian and the baroness as a triumph for the EU's member states over its bureaucracy's more federalist vision. The thinking goes that by securing the appointment of two nonentities to what are (notionally) the most prestigious jobs in the union's new structure, Sarkozy, Merkel, and the rest of the gang successfully defended what remains of their countries' prerogative to decide the most important matters for themselves. To believe this is to misread just how lose-lose the situation was. In reality, the nonentities will be as damaging (maybe even more so) to what's left of national sovereignty as better-known candidates such as the much-anticipated Tony Blair. Blair would have given the presidency more clout. He would have done so, however, at the expense not only of the EU's member states, but also of the Brussels bureaucracy.

The EU's new president is, as mentioned above, technically the president of the European Council, a body formally incorporated within the EU's architecture by the Lisbon Treaty after years in a curious organizational

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limbo. With a membership now made up of the union's heads of government, van Rompuy, and the inevitable Barroso, it is theoretically the bloc's supreme political institution. And theoretically therefore, the stronger it is (and with a heavyweight president it would supposedly have been stronger), the more it would be able to operate as a counterweight to the bureaucrats of the EU Commission. I suspect that this would never have been the case, but with van Rompuy, a housetrained federalist (he has already told a meeting arranged by—let a hundred conspiracy theories flower—the Bilderberg Group that he favors giving the EU tax-raising powers), at its helm, the point is moot. The key, van Rompuy reportedly claimed, to high office within the EU is to be a "gray mouse," and so, to the chagrin of Blair and those like him, it has proved. Sarkozy, Merkel, and all the rest of their more colorful kind will continue to prance and to parade, and power will continue to leach away from the nation states and into the unaccountable oligarchy that is "Brussels."

"It's all over," my friend Hans told me when Klaus threw in the towel, "Brussels has won." Hans, thirtysomething, a native of one of the EU's smaller nations, and a former adviser to one of the continent's better-known Euroskeptics, comes as close to anyone I have ever met from the European mainland to being a Burkean Tory—and Hans has now given up. He would, he sighed, have to move on with his life.

Herman van Rompuy

ALVERARO BARRIENTOS / ASSOCIATED PRESS

With Lisbon in force, little is left of the already sharply curtailed ability of any one member-state (or its voters) to veto the inroads of fresh EU legislation. In Hans's view, the treaty means that the momentum towards a European super-state is now irreversible. With their sovereignty emasculated and, in many cases, their sense of identity crumbling under the linked assaults of multiculturalism and mass immigration, the old nation states of Europe have neither the ability nor the inclination to say no. Euroskepticism will now be portrayed (not always inaccurately) as the mark of the crank or the Quixote. "And that," added Hans, a man still at a relatively early stage in his career, "is not the way to go either politically or professionally."

Signing up, however unenthusiastically, for the orthodoxies of the European Union is now de rigueur in the continent's ruling class. And if there was once idealism behind the Brussels project it has long since been overwhelmed by another of the beliefs that lay behind it—that neither nations nor their electorates could be trusted to do the right thing. Sovereignty, whether national or democratic or both, is being replaced by oligarchy, technocracy, and the pieties of the "social market." If you live in an oligarchy, it's best to be an oligarch.

This realization is one of the reasons that the EU has got as far as it has. It has provided excellent opportunities for some of Europe's best, brightest, and lightest-fingered to move back and forth between the union's hierarchy and those parts of the private sector (and indeed the national civil services) that feed off it.

Yet all was not gloom, said Hans. A stronger sense of their own identity and a still distinct political culture meant, he thought, that it wasn't too late for the Brits to do the right thing (as he sees it) and quit the EU. He is too optimistic. While correct that most Britons are irritated by the EU and its presumptions, he overlooks the fact that they have not yet shown any signs of wanting to end this most miserable of marriages. Hans also underestimates the subtler factors standing in the way of the long-promised punch-up between any incoming Tory government and Brussels—an event that in any case has now been postponed. David Cameron's party has shelved its plans for a referendum on the Lisbon Treaty. Now that it has come into force, modifying the treaty to accommodate the U.K. would require the assent of all the other member-states and that won't be forthcoming. A British referendum, Cameron claims, would therefore be pointless. How convenient for him.

Cameron has also made it clear that he has no intention of revisiting the U.K.'s relations with the EU in any serious way for quite some time. With Britain's economy in ruins, any incoming government will have more pressing priorities. And the passing of time only further entrenches the EU's new constitutional settlement deeper into the U.K.'s fabric—and especially the landscape in which the country's able and ambitious build their careers. That's something that Cameron may also have recognized. He appears to have concluded that it is better to win a premiership diminished by Brussels than no premiership at all, and a major row over Britain's role within the EU could yet cost the Tory leader the keys to 10 Downing Street.

The additional complication is debt-burdened Britain's dependence on the financial markets as a source of fresh funds. Investors are averse to uncertainty. They are already twitchy about Britain's disintegrating balance sheet, and a

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savage row between Britain and the rest of the EU would set nerves even further on edge. Then there's the small matter that such a conflict is hardly likely to help Britain persuade its European partners to bail the U.K. out in the event that this should prove necessary—and it might.

The more time passes, the more an empowered EU will insinuate itself within national life (rule from Brussels is a fairly subtle form of foreign occupation: No panzers will trundle down Whitehall). It will come to be seen as "normal," not perfect, by any means, and certainly the cause of sporadic outbreaks of grumbling, but if handled with enough discretion (it will be a while before the Commission resumes efforts to sign Britain up for the "borderless" EU of the Schengen Agreement) and enough dishonesty, it will benefit from the traditional British reluctance to make a fuss. As on the continent, protesting deeper integration within the union, let alone trying to reverse it, will be depicted—and regarded—as the preserve of the eccentric and the obsessive.

With Britain hogtied, the Lisbon structure will endure unchanged unless a prolonged economic slowdown (or worse) finally shatters the gimcrack foundations on which the EU rests. That cannot be ruled out, but if Lisbon holds, the implications will be profound for the international environment in which the United States has to operate. There is already chatter (from the Italian foreign minister, for instance) about a European army. Can it be long before there is a drive by Brussels to replace the British and French seats on the U.N. Security Council with one that represents the entire EU, a move that would eliminate the one vote in that body on which the United States has almost always been able to rely?

Baroness Ashton of Upholland

UPPA / ZUMA PRESS / NEWSCOM

And to ask that question is to wonder what sort of partner the EU will be for the United States. One clue can be found in the fact that the new High representative for foreign affairs and security policy was treasurer and then a vice chairman of Britain's unilateralist Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament at the end of the Brezhnev era. Another comes from remarks by Austria's Social Democratic chancellor Werner Faymann in response to the speculation that Tony Blair would be appointed to the new presidency during the fall: "The candidate . . . should have an especially good relationship with Obama and not stand for a good working relationship with Bush."

Leaving aside the minor matter that George W. Bush has not been president for nearly a year, it's not difficult to get Faymann's drift. The Obama administration will find the EU a reasonably congenial partner, even ally, so long as it sticks to the sort of transnationalist agenda that could have been cooked up in Turtle Bay, the Berlaymont, or Al Gore's fevered imagination. If on the other hand, Obama, or any subsequent president, should turn to policies that are more avowedly in this country's national interest, the EU could well turn out to be an obstacle. After all, in the absence of any authentic EU identity, its leadership has often defined their union by what it is not. And what it is not, Eurocrats stress, is America.

Washington will have to learn to accept surly neutrality, if not active antagonism, from the oligarchs of Brussels. The EU may not be able to do much to hinder the United States directly, but, as its "common" foreign (and, increasingly, defense) policy develops, there's a clear risk that it will be at the expense of NATO. Shared EU projects will drain both cohesion and resources away from the Atlantic alliance, not to speak of the ability of America's closer European allies to go it alone and help Uncle Sam out.

Some of this will be deliberate, but more often than not it will be the result of institutional paralysis. As a profoundly artificial construction, the EU lacks—beyond the shared prejudices of some of its elite—any sense of the idea of us and them that lies at the root of a nation or even an empire, and, therefore, the ability to shape a foreign policy acceptable to enough of its constituent parts for it to take any form of effective action. But if the EU might find it difficult to decide what it will do, it will find it easy to agree what its members cannot do. The days when Britain will have the right, let alone the ability, to send its troops to aid America over the protests of Germany and France are coming to a close.

Bowing, but this time to the inevitable, Obama has welcomed the completion of the Lisbon Treaty process, saying that "a strengthened and renewed EU will be an even better transatlantic partner with the United States," an absurd claim that one can only hope he does not believe.

Ah yes, hope. ♦

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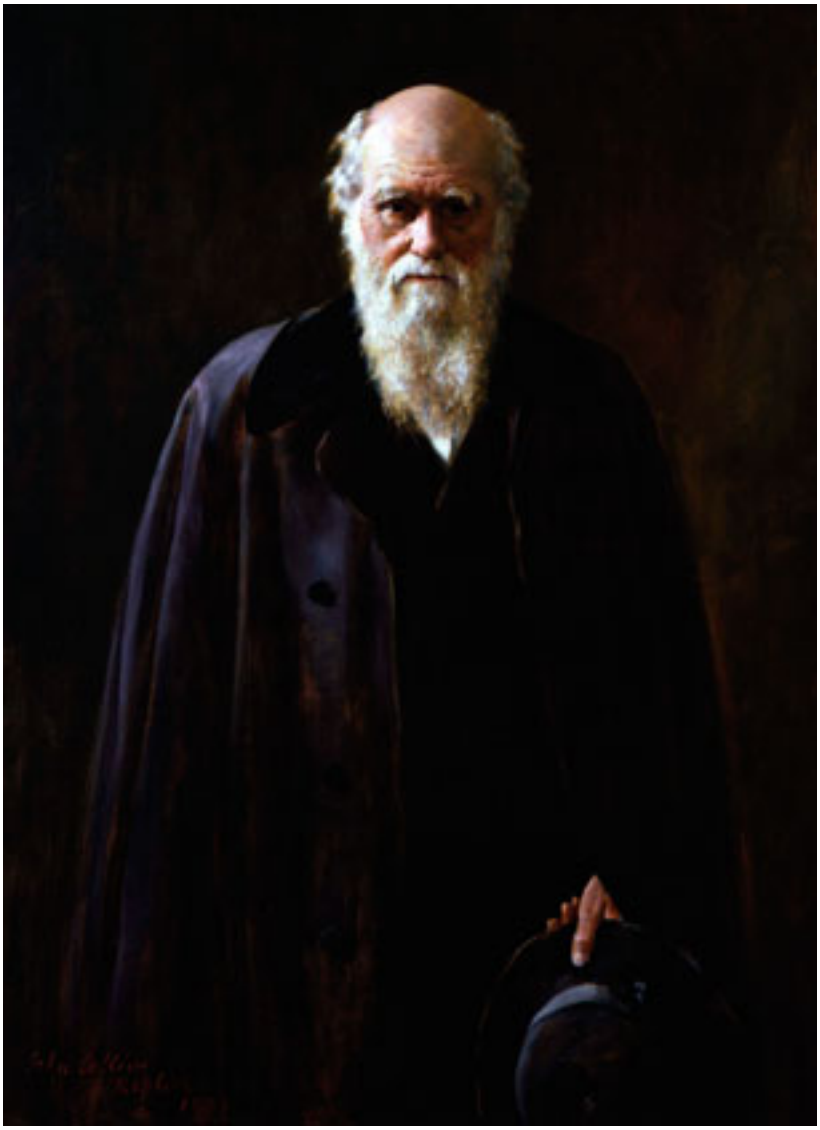
Darwin Turns 200

The gentleman-naturalist who reinvented biology

BY DAVID GELERNTER



Portrait of Charles Darwin by John Collier (1883)

Darwin is a huge presence in the modern world, in two ways. He was a remarkable thinker, a great scientist, and the most influential biologist in history. He revolutionized the study of nature. He is also a cultural presence. Increasingly he is the venerated image carried in torchlight processions by bands of angry, chanting atheists ("Darwin! Darwin! Darwin!") who dominate the impoverished streets of the intellectual world.

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Tim Berra's *Charles Darwin*—published on the bicentennial of Darwin's birth—is an adequate introduction to the man and his thought for those who aren't terribly interested. The text runs less than 200 pages, and brings to mind a kindly teacher reading to a rapt circle of eight-year-olds. "Annie died of tuberculosis, which was known as consumption in those days." "He carried out his communications with scientists via letters—lots of them."

Charles Darwin
The Concise Story of an Extraordinary Man
by Tim M. Berra
Johns Hopkins, 144 pp., $19.95

Berra recites the facts, but rarely comments. We know (for example) that Darwin's was an extraordinary mind. Yet he spent eight years in the prime of life studying barnacles. Berra explains why: His eminent colleague Joseph Dalton Hooker had told him that "no one has hardly a right to examine the question of species who has not minutely described many." Darwin had already conceived his big idea of evolution by natural selection, but instead of publishing it, he hunkered down and worked on barnacles. He himself grew colossally bored—but he soldiered on. How could this brilliant scientific virtuoso stifle his imagi-

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nation for eight years while he focused on nothing but the finger exercises of biology?—playing scales and arpeggios and never one measure of music? Strange. Berra has no comment.

But the main theme comes through loud and clear. Darwin's (and Alfred Russel Wallace's) theory of evolution by natural selection is made to seem simple and inevitable, which it is. Ordinary farmyard breeding produces new variants as a result of deliberate crosses and spontaneous genetic errors, or mutations. When the breeder sees a new variant he likes, he does his best to propagate it; this is "artificial selection." But it's clear also that, regardless of the breeder's plans, certain new variants are more robust than others: are better suited to survive and thrive in the environments in which they live. And left to their own devices, the more robust variants supplant, over time, the less robust varieties.

Given these simple observations, natural selection *must* happen, and must bring about the gradual transformation, or evolution, of living things. Spontaneous mutations create variant forms of life. Some variants are more robust than others; some are more robust than the original. In a world of limited resources, the better-adapted versions stand a better chance of surviving, thriving, and reproducing. Darwin guessed, further, that natural selection is powerful enough to transform one species into another (or many others)—and also to eradicate a species, leaving the field to its tougher competitors. What scientists have learned from the study of ancient and modern life strongly supports Darwin's guess.

"The theory of evolution," writes Berra in the first sentence of his introduction, "is arguably the greatest idea the human mind ever had," and this sentence is arguably one of the silliest. If you put Darwin next to a Newton or an Einstein, a Beethoven or an Isaiah, he is out of his league and beyond his depth. Treating Darwin as one of *the* presiding geniuses of human thought is unfair to him; he never asked to be compared to Newton. In fact, thinking back to the barnacle years, the heretical idea tiptoes shyly across the mind that Darwin was not so much brilliant as shrewd. In any case, his ideas have been profoundly influential. Darwinian evolution is the core (the elevator stack) of modern biology, paleontology, and genetics, which have grown up gradually around it. Moreover, Darwin took good care of his family and was generous to his colleagues. He was a gentleman genius.

Nowadays some thinkers question Darwin's role at the center of modern thought. The most impressive accept evolution by natural selection (which is impossible not to accept) but aren't sure that this mechanism is enough to explain nature as we find it.

Some of their qualms are unconvincing. A dissident often cites some marvelously subtle and complex piece of human anatomy (the eye, the hand, etc.), points to the countless millions of exquisitely graduated steps required by natural selection (that blindfolded drunk) in order to reach this goal, notes the staggering improbability of such a sequence of developments happening just by accident, and rests his case.

Except there is no case. In evolution, all outcomes are equally improbable—but there is no reason to think that the one we know is somehow the ideal; is somehow the tiny bull's eye that natural selection (by a stupendously implausible run of luck) somehow managed to hit. Evolution deals in failures, not successes. All we know about the "successes" is that they have survived so far, because they've proved stronger than the other contestants with which they were matched along the way. The human eye is impressive, but it's easy to imagine a human-type creature with eyes that see only infrared, or with some sort of radar instead of eyes. And although our eyes *are* impressive (I am not filing a complaint), why can't they see infrared, giving us a sort of built-in night vision? Why can't they tune in radio waves? And would it have been asking so much for them to be slouch- and deformation-resistant, so that no one would ever need glasses?

Darwin's study at Down House

ANDY RAIN / EPA / CORBIS

Yet Darwinian evolution does sometimes seem to crash into a wall.

Consciousness is a hard problem for Darwinians. Imagine a "zombie" (which is a standard exercise not just at the movies but in philosophy) that looks and behaves just as we do, speaks in the same way, and is completely indistinguishable from a human being. But a zombie has no mental life. Inside its head, there is nobody home. It forms no mental images and, although it registers the world around it, it

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experiences nothing. Tell it to imagine a rose and it's capable of *describing* an imaginary rose, but it sees no picture in its mind's eye; it's no more capable than your laptop of calling to mind mental images. Kick it hard in the shins and it shouts—but it's all just an elaborate act, because the zombie experiences neither pain nor anything else.

Some thinkers hold that zombies are impossible. But others see no reason in principle why they couldn't exist. And if they did, such zombies could thrive just as well as we do. But if that's so, why should self-aware, conscious beings like us ever have emerged? What good does consciousness do us? What selective advantage does it confer? It might simply have come bundled with the "fancy brain" package, as an accidental byproduct. But such a hypothesis seems to violate the economy and efficiency we associate with the ruthless mechanism of natural selection. To imagine consciousness, the central fact of human existence, as traveling beneath the radar of natural selection is not satisfying.

It's also true that the more biologists insist on our near genetic kinship to apes and other mammals, the more striking our utter incomparability to all other creatures, plain and fancy. We have known all along that apes are much closer to us than to jellyfish, and the narrow genetic footing on which this towering difference stands makes it all the more amazing. We've heard all about the intelligence of dolphins, whales, and apes; but if they're so smart, why don't they make Ape-TV documentaries about us? Why is it only we who study them? Why don't they build hospitals, write books, paint pictures, make jokes, or argue about God?

David Berlinski, one of the most impressive Darwin dissenters, quotes (in a *Commentary* essay) a smugly childish pronouncement by the journal *Nature*: "With all deference to the sensibilities of religious people, the idea that man was created in the image of God can surely be put aside." But what makes these ignoramuses so sure they know what the Bible means by "create"? How do they know that "evolution by natural selection" is not exactly what the Bible does mean? And how do they know that man is *not* "in the image of God"? Yes, we all know about the Bible's famous seven days, but has *Nature* never heard of a parable? It's not such a difficult concept. Does *Nature* fault the Bible for not starting with an account of Darwinian evolution?—right after the verses dealing with the Big Bang and astrophysics, which in turn follow the verses that brush everyone up on the necessary algebra, geometry, and calculus?

"The Torah speaks in the language of man," say the rabbis, and when the Bible emerged, men did not speak Darwin's language. But they did care about right and wrong, good and evil, justice and mercy, sanctity and man and God, and these (not biology or astrophysics) are the Bible's topics.

Charles Darwin was a great thinker who taught us not only about science, but about religion—specifically, about what religion does *not* teach, and (for that matter) does not care about. He was buried in Westminster Abbey, at England's Christian heart. Darwin rejected the church, but the church didn't reject him. What does that mean? Berra has no comment. ♦

B&A

Alive and Well

A historian of modern conservatism ponders the future.

BY PETER BERKOWITZ

The historian George H. Nash begins his invaluable collection of essays on conservatism's origins, current predicaments, and future challenges by noting that, following the historic election of Barack Obama last November, the demise of conservatism was widely reported. Leading progressive thinkers including *New Yorker* staff writer George Packer, *Washington Post* columnist E.J. Dionne, and *New York Times Sunday Book Review* editor Sam Tanenhaus were quick to proclaim that modern conservatism was dysfunctional and decadent and was rapidly descending into a death spiral. Not a few prominent conservatives worried that they might be right.

Reappraising the Right
The Past and Future of American Conservatism
by George H. Nash
ISI, 400 pp., $27.95

A senior fellow at the Russell Kirk Center for Cultural Renewal, and an associate of the Hauenstein Center for Presidential Studies, Nash provides good reasons to think that they are wrong. He argues that the Bush presidency, which demoralized many conservatives, is fading into the past; conservatism has become institutionalized in a "burgeoning infrastructure of alternative media, foundations, research centers, think tanks, publishing houses, law firms, homeschooling networks, and more"; and most important, the original factors that gave birth to modern conservatism—dramatic expansion of the federal government, menacing foreign threats, and a popular culture hostile to faith and traditional morality—have never gone away, or have resurfaced in new guises. To be sure, Nash adroitly investigates the tensions and strains within modern conservatism. But his sobering and steadying book shows that the death of conservatism has been greatly exaggerated.

Despite having earned a Harvard doctorate, and having performed prolific scholarly labors for several decades, Nash for the most part has worked without

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a conventional university appointment. The author, among his six other books, of the landmark study *The Conservative Intellectual Movement in America since 1945* (1976) and a three-volume biography of Herbert Hoover (the last of which appeared in 1996), he writes with an all-but-unparalleled command of the figures and forces that mark American conservatism. This new book may provide the single most lucid analysis available of the varieties of American conservatism and their common convictions, mutual opponents, and underlying antagonisms. It effectively illustrates that conservatism in America is, and has been since its emergence in the 1950s, "a wide river with many tributaries." And it persuasively argues that to persevere today, conservatives must learn in changed circumstances how to preserve its sources and navigate its crosscurrents.

Nash in no way minimizes the conundrums that the conservative coalition confronts. He knows that "intramural squabbling" runs deep. He appreciates that hard choices must be made: Some conservatives want to "go 'back to basics' and proclaim their principles with renewed fervor after the frustrations and muddled compromises of the past eight years." Others insist that conservatives ought to "calm down and concentrate on devising fresh public policy initiatives designed to attract a putatively centrist and pragmatic electorate." He recognizes that conservatives who put limited government first, those who put culture, morals, and religion first, and those who put national security first, are having a difficult time agreeing on priorities. And he realizes that whatever path conservatives choose, if they are to regain the confidence of a majority of Americans, they will have to develop a positive agenda and devise a compelling language appropriate to the controversies and adversaries America faces as it enters the second decade of the 21st century.

This urgent need to adjust to a changing and threatening world is, in fact, a common condition for conservatism. Nash reminds that, more than a half-century ago, Whittaker Chambers observed that, "Those who remain in the world, if they will not surrender on its terms, must maneuver within its terms." For those who seek to defend eternal truths and enduring virtues, and who also recognize an obligation to take a share of responsibility for the conduct and the direction of public life in a free society, balancing the good and the necessary is a constant imperative. Because that balancing must be artful, judicious, and not in flight from but in the service of principle, it is also a daunting task.

From the beginning, the variety of principles at play compounded the difficulties. Modern American conservatism emerged after World War II as a coalition of competing schools united by a common opponent: "There was not one right-wing renaissance but three, each reacting in diverse ways to challenge from the left."

George H. Nash

The first renaissance, sparked by the 1944 publication of Friedrich von Hayek's *The Road to Serfdom*, "consisted of libertarians and classical liberals, resisting the threat of the ever-expanding State to individual liberty, free market capitalism, and the individual initiative in the economic realm." It was carried forward by, among others, Milton Friedman, Thomas Sowell, the Chicago school led by Nobel Prize winner Gary Becker, and the supply-side theorists of the 1980s.

The second renaissance was that of the "new conservatism" or "traditionalism." Alarmed by secularization and the spread of mass industrialized society, these thinkers "urged a return to traditional religious and ethical absolutes and a rejection of the moral relativism that had allegedly corroded Western values and produced an intolerable vacuum filled by demonic ideologies." Richard Weaver's *Ideas Have Consequences* (1948) and Russell Kirk's *The Conservative Mind* (1953) serve as foundational texts. Although neither is properly classified among the traditionalists, Leo Strauss and Eric Voegelin both provided intellectual support for the new conservatives by producing ground-breaking scholarship that exposed weaknesses and blind spots inhering in modern philosophy and discovered reservoirs of wisdom in ancient and medieval thought.

The third conservative renaissance was led by anti-Communists, many of whom were ex-Communists and ex-Trotskyists. They "brought to the postwar American right a profound conviction that America and the West were engaged in a titanic struggle with an implacable adversary—communism—which sought nothing less than the conquest of the world." The towering figure among them was Chambers, whose testimony was crucial to the conviction for perjury of Alger Hiss, a distinguished member of the liberal establishment and, as the opening of the Soviet Union's archives indisputably established, a Soviet spy. Chambers's masterpiece memoir, *Witness*, examines not only the momentous military confrontation between the United States and the Soviet Union, but the decisive contest over man's spiritual life contained in the contest between liberal democracy and communism.

Nash enlivens his account with portraits of an intriguing cast of relatively forgotten journalists and scholars who made substantial contributions to the post-1945 conservative renaissance. These include John Chamberlain, a daily book reviewer in the 1930s for the *New York Times* who, 20 years later, became *National Review*'s lead book reviewer; the brilliant and iconoclastic political theorist Willmoore Kendall;

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historian Forrest McDonald, a pioneer in the recovery of the Founders' intellectual outlook and political achievement; E. Victor Milione, whose leadership at the Intercollegiate Studies Institute over the course of several decades enabled it to become a home to both libertarians and traditionalists; social scientist Ernest van den Haag, who developed a conservatism that was empirical and skeptical, "grounded not in religious faith but upon a recognition of the limits of reason in the pursuit of social betterment"; and the political scientist Francis Graham Wilson, author in the early 1950s of *The Case for Conservatism*, which took issue with the already well-established consensus among university professors and throughout the elite that New Deal liberalism was self-sufficient and the only intellectually respectable alternative to communism.

At the same time, Nash makes emphatically clear that no one contributed more to the conservative renaissance than William F. Buckley Jr. Columnist, author of dozens of books of fiction and nonfiction, long-running TV talk show host, bon vivant and, most influentially, founder in 1955 of *National Review*, the flagship organ of modern American conservatism and editor in chief from its inception until 1990, Buckley robustly united in his own larger-than-life personality modern conservatism's free market, traditionalist, and anti-Communist strands. And critically, as Nash recounts, Buckley provided at the office, and in the pages, of *National Review* a welcoming home to representatives of conservatism's disputatious factions. Buckley was able to fuse them not only through the force of his extraordinary gifts but because, at bottom, they shared the conviction that 20th-century liberalism generated urgent threats to freedom at home, and blinded its proponents to grave threats to freedom abroad.

The 1960s and '70s saw the addition of two more components to the conservative coalition. Neoconservatism arose among disaffected liberals in response to the excesses of Lyndon Johnson's Great Society programs; the tendency on the left, which received loud expression during the Vietnam war, to blame the world's ills on America first; and the cultural upheavals of the 1960s. Nash deftly analyzes the intellectual trek made by a small but influential group of liberals led by *Public Interest* editor Irving Kristol and *Commentary* editor Norman Podhoretz from left to center to right. At the same time, he describes sympathetically the obstacles that original components of the conservative coalition confronted (and still confront) in welcoming into the fold those who, while opposing the left's intellectual predilections and public policies, still wish to conserve key elements of the welfare state and energetically promote liberty and democracy abroad.

Herbert Hoover as secretary of commerce, 1928

TROPICAL PRESS AGENCY / GETTY IMAGES

A fifth component, the religious right, emerged in the 1970s and became politically potent in the '80s. Nash takes care to distinguish their perspective from that of traditionalist conservatives, with whom they share much. Whereas the traditionalists were predominantly intellectuals criticizing mass society, the ranks of the religious right are composed of ordinary people rebelling against what they regard as the pretensions and usurpations of a secular cultural elite, particularly on social issues, especially abortion. And whereas the traditionalists were disproportionately Roman Catholic, the religious right, while including Catholics and Orthodox Jews, has been predominantly a movement of evangelical Protestants.

The several essays he devotes to Herbert Hoover, a "neglected conservative sage," advance Nash's overarching argument that conservatism's vitality depends on its capacity to achieve a prudent balance. Entering the college at Stanford University the year it opened its doors in 1891, and graduating in the class of 1895, Hoover was trained as a mining engineer and prospered in business ventures in Australia and China. He turned to public life at the beginning of World War I, concentrating on relief efforts until his appointment by Warren Harding as secretary of commerce in 1921. It will come as a surprise to many readers to learn from Nash that, thanks to "his far-flung humanitarian endeavors," Hoover "was responsible for saving more lives than any person who has ever lived." Elected to the presidency in 1928 as a progressive Republican, he presided over the greatest economic catastrophe in American history and was unable, before Franklin Roosevelt defeated him in 1932, to find a way out of it. After leaving office, he became a preeminent critic of the New Deal for its massive expansion of government, and kept up his defense of individual freedom until his death at 90 in 1964.

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Nash examines its many parts and shows that Hoover's career presents an "idiosyncratic blend of progressivism and antistatism" and provides a surprisingly compelling model of how to combine a passion for reform with a commitment to limited government. In what Hoover said of "true liberalism"—that it "is found not in striving to spread bureaucracy but in striving to set bounds to it"—Nash discerns an attainable and worthy goal for a true conservatism today.

But important as such a goal is, conservatism, in Nash's assessment, can hardly be limited to limiting government bureaucracy. Limited government is a means to securing individual freedom—the larger goal, Nash admiringly observes, to which America's experiment in self-government is dedicated. But neither the dedication to political freedom nor the wherewithal to maintain it and enjoy its many blessings can be assumed. So conservatives seek means, consistent with limited government and individual freedom, to nourish the taste for freedom and discipline its exercise. In other words, they appreciate the mutual dependence of freedom and virtue. Not all conservatives will agree with Nash, who embraces Tocqueville's contention, which echoes Washington's Farewell Address, that liberty "cannot be established without morality, nor morality without faith." It is, however, incumbent on those who disagree to explain from where, if not in morality and faith, the virtues on which freedom depends will emerge.

However that question is decided, if it wishes to prosper and preserve freedom, a free society can neither neglect virtue nor legislate it directly. That's one important reason why "American conservatism at its Reaganite best is a combination of impulses—of realism and idealism, of prudence and hope, of worldly sobriety and faith-based aspiration." Nash's graceful and incisive exploration of the history of conservatism in America demonstrates that the need to achieve balance among rival principles and competing goods is nothing new, and in a free society, will always go to the heart of the matter. ♦

B&A

'Messiah' Man

The music of George Frideric Handel 'makes you want to live.' **BY ALGIS VALIUNAS**

This year marked the 250th anniversary of the death of George Frideric Handel (1685-1759), and musical hallelujahs rang out around the world, as choral societies, professional and amateur, trotted out the warhorse oratorios, and opera houses not only presented the now-standard works (*Alcina*, *Orlando*, *Serse*, and *Giulio Cesare in Egitto*) but also dug deep for esoterica (*Ezio*, *Partenope*).

England, which despite Handel's German origins justly claims him as its greatest composer, was the cynosure of this festive music. Westminster Abbey, where Handel lies buried beside Charles Dickens in Poets' Corner, was the site of a performance of *Messiah* on April 14, the date of his death. BBC3 Radio conducted a year long celebration, including broadcasts of all 42 operas on successive Thursdays, reaching a climax during Easter week, when it was pretty much all Handel, all the time.

The Handel House Museum also commissioned a new oratorio based on Handel's life and work, *25 Brook Street* (the address of the London house, now the museum, where he lived for 36 years and where he died), in a collaboration by four British composers. Another museum production is the exhibition *Handel Reveal'd*, focusing on those biographical subjects dear to all modern democrats: the great man's finances, health, and his legendary *gourmandise*. The Foundling Hospital is holding another exhibition, *Handel the Philanthropist*; a good man as well as a great one, he conducted regular benefit performances of *Messiah* in the hospital chapel.

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The great man fills his admirers with ecumenical richness of heart. The Australian Broadcasting Corporation kicked off its multicultural series of sacred music, *The Rhythm Divine*, with excerpts from *Messiah* done by one of Sydney's finest Anglican church choirs; Handel's masterpiece remains sufficiently world-spiritual to be accorded a place beside Indian ragas for meditation and compositions inspired by Islam. Israel hosted three performances of the oratorio *Saul* by the Stuttgart choir and orchestra *Laudamus Te* with German, Israeli, and Brazilian soloists; one of the performances was at the Ein Gedi resort, near the cave where David hid from Saul. In the United States, meanwhile, regional opera companies that had not undertaken Handel before introduced his work for the lyric stage to audiences familiar only with *Messiah*, and educational institutions from Phillips Exeter Academy to the University of Kansas did their hopeful best with memorial lectures and recitals to lay the groundwork for another generation of Handel lovers.

Handel was born in Halle in 1685, the same year as Johann Sebastian Bach, and was christened Georg Friedrich Händel. As is customary with musical genius, talent and inclination showed themselves in boyhood. However, his father, a surgeon-barber and *valet de chambre* to the Duke of Saxe-Weissenfels, 63 years old at Handel's birth, was dead set that his son would not grow up to be a musician; a career in civil law was the only way to go. Paternal strictures against the boy's having anything to do with music only enhanced his desire. The enterprising youngster secretly had a small clavichord brought to an attic

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room, and there he practiced while everyone else in the house was sleeping. Then one day, after the seven-year-old had finagled a visit to the duke's court with his father, the duke heard him playing the organ and proclaimed his genius, which must not be wasted. The duke persuaded the father to let Handel have music lessons, gave the boy more money than he had ever seen, and told him that if he worked hard he would enjoy every encouragement.

Who can argue with an openhanded potentate? Organ, harpsichord, violin, and composition lessons ensued, and it transpired that the youth was a budding master. Yet after his father's death, his mother emotionally strong-armed her son into pursuing legal studies at the University of Halle. He would never make a lawyer. A month into his first term, the Halle Cathedral offered him the post of organist, and he leaped at the chance. Also, he met Georg Philipp Telemann, another law student in spite of himself, at the University of Leipzig. Telemann performed the invaluable service of true friendship: He introduced Handel to opera, which was not to be found in Halle at the time, and which would become a major aspect of Handel's vocation—indeed, apart from *Messiah*, the basis of his current reputation as the second musical wonder, after Bach, of his time.

Opera can be a hellion's sport, and playing the harpsichord in the orchestra pit for a purported friend's opera became a near-death experience for Handel. In 1704, at a performance in Hamburg of Johann Mattheson's *Cleopatra*, the opera's composer, who had been conducting from the harpsichord, mounted the stage to sing Antony, and Handel took over for him at the keyboard. After Antony's suicide, Mattheson returned to the harpsichord to finish the opera, but Handel refused to budge. Such a matter of artistic protocol was not to be taken lightly, and to top off the evening's entertainment, the two men drew swords. Mattheson's blade shattered on Handel's large metal coat-button.

The young wizard had an operatic success of his own in 1705, also in Hamburg, with *Almira*, in which Mattheson was the principal tenor, and Handel followed that in short order with *Nero*, *Florinda*, and *Daphne*, for which the music has been lost. However, the upsurge of Pietism, which frowned on all theatrical spectacle, was making Hamburg inhospitable to opera, and in 1706 he lit out for points south. In Rome he promptly won the regard, and most important the patronage, of leading princes of the church; his being a Lutheran did not prevent cardinals of extravagant aesthetic plumage from honoring his gifts. Cardinal Vincenzo Grimani, a scarlet magnifico, actually wrote the libretto for Handel's immensely successful *Agrippina*, a bitter comedy of lustrous darkness, wicked as Monteverdi's *L'incoronazione di Poppea*, and featuring some of the same figures from imperial Rome's decadence. The cardinal's family theater in Venice, reputedly the finest in town, put on the show.

It is of course 'Messiah' that remains Handel's nonpareil work. Here the secular and the sacred are joined, as Handel constructs a monument to everlasting truth on a pedestal of familiar, worldly beauty.

But it would be in London, where Handel landed for good in 1712 after bouncing between England and Germany, that he made his name, both for his day and centuries to come. He had his work cut out for him. The English were slow to cotton to the pleasures of opera, tending to consider it a poor sister of the spoken drama. *Opera seria*, serious opera, featuring tales of historical grandees or mythological heroes or characters from chivalric romance, posed serious hazards for audience and composer alike. The *da capo* aria—take it from the top—in a strictly ritualized A-B-A form, the repetition as exorbitant in its embellishments as a Balinese warlord's headdress, was and still is responsible for numerous reported cases of coloratura-induced coma; and in the original performing version of *Giulio Cesare*, the title character and Cleopatra had eight arias apiece.

The *recitativo secco*, dry recitative, the speech-like foundation of the drama, or what the singers sing when they are not engaged in their vocal high-wire act, was pitched toward rapid fire inexpressiveness. The plot frequently ran every which way, and its entanglements were unsubtly unknotted by a god from the machine or other wonder-worker. And a night at the opera meant accepting a disquieting moral grotesquerie, for the reigning deities of the stage were the castrati, who had endured the all-but-ultimate sacrifice for the greater glory of—well, themselves, such as they were.

From a noble lady in the throes, the most celebrated of these virile eunuchs received the highest tribute a divo can get: "One God, one Farinelli!"

The Queen's Theatre in the Haymarket was the brainchild of the redoubtable Sir John Vanbrugh, impresario, playwright, architect of Blenheim Palace for the Duke of Marlborough, and at the Queen's, Vanbrugh presented the first Italian opera written specifically for the English stage, Handel's *Rinaldo* (1711). It was the first of many London hits for the composer. He would make Italian *opera seria* the most popular ticket in town. For years English-language opera never stood a chance in London: Handel's Italian tunes written for Italian singers were the rage.

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The great world took to Handel with warmth and gusto. The 18-year-old Lord Burlington opened his purse and his magnificent Piccadilly house to him, and Handel spent three years as a sort of composer-in-residence. Queen Anne bestowed a generous pension for life on the winning composer, who had turned out a *Te Deum* and *Jubilate* very much to her liking for the 1713 Treaty of Utrecht. Her successor, George I, became a regular with the royal family at the opera, and commissioned the famous *Water Music*, originally performed on a barge in the Thames on a July evening in 1717; the king enjoyed the music so much that he had it played three times as he floated downriver.

In 1719 a contingent of noblemen, hoping to serve art and to make a killing, founded the Royal Academy of Music—the king was glad to imprint his seal—a joint-stock company designed principally to secure the rights to Handel's operas for the foreseeable future. Although other composers, such as Giovanni Bononcini and Attilio Ariosti, contributed to the venture, Handel wrote most of the operas and oversaw the artistic operation. He had a great run, producing such sterling works as *Giulio Cesare* (1724), *Tamerlano* (1724), and *Rodelinda* (1725), but eventually the expense of the enterprise brought it down. When the house was shuttered in 1728, John Gay's *The Beggar's Opera*, with its simple ballads and low-life atmospherics, was pulling in the crowds at Lincoln's Inn Fields. Handel would persist in the Italian operatic vein, as efforts by the librettist Joseph Addison and the composer Thomas Arne to convince him to write English operas failed utterly. As of 1733, however, the new incarnation of the Royal Academy at Covent Garden had to compete with the upstart Opera of the Nobility, and London simply could not sustain two opera companies; both went belly-up in 1737. Handel almost went belly-up himself that year, suffering an apparent stroke that temporarily crippled his right hand and his mental powers.

Fortunately, hardiness won out, and the second stage of his career got underway. Actually, it had already gotten underway in 1733, when he had written his first English oratorios, *Deborah* and *Esther*. Generally speaking, oratorio is a musical dramatic work on a sacred theme, performed in a church or a concert hall without the usual operatic accoutrements of costumes and scenery. There are, of course, variations and exceptions. The most famous of oratorios, *Messiah*, is really not a drama or even a narrative, exactly, but a sort of meditative celebration of the essential Christian mystery, like an ornate alternative form of the Mass.

KATHERINE EASTLAND

Disenchanted with the worldly beguilements of opera, Handel hurled himself upon his new métier with a convert's zeal, and enhanced both his already considerable name and his treasure in doing so. Besides *Messiah*, which was hailed as the musical *ne plus ultra* at its Dublin premiere in 1742, Handel's best-known oratorios include *Saul* (1739), *Samson* (1743), and *Judas Maccabaeus* (1747). He was after something here that he had been unable to attain in Italian opera: There was a moral impetus behind his composition now; spiritual elevation was the end he pursued. When a noble friend congratulated him on the superb entertainment he had just provided his audience, Handel replied, "My lord, I should be sorry if I only entertained them; I wish to make them better."

Although there were some Puritans who regarded oratorio as sacrilege, for the most part London audiences were only too happy to take Handel's instruction with their delight. He died wealthy and esteemed. He wanted a private funeral, but 3,000 people crowded Westminster Abbey for his burial service. It was the turn toward sanctity that established Handel as the musical paragon in English hearts, and in others' as well. Goethe would claim that *Messiah* led him "to the most serious in musical art." Beethoven praised Handel as the greatest composer ever—"I would uncover my head, and kneel down at his tomb"—and revered *Messiah* above all.

Handel's operas, however, fell into oblivion for a very long time. After a revival of *Admeto* in 1754, none was staged anywhere until the 20th century, when a German academic mounted a production of *Rodelinda* in 1920. Happily, that prolonged oversight has now been corrected, and Handel's operas are once again in fashion on the stage and in the recording studio. Their place is rightly among the best. Like the

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other great popular operatic composers—Mozart, Donizetti, Verdi, Bizet, Puccini—Handel is above all a superb melodist, and employs tuneful music to delineate complex emotion with ravishing delicacy—and as subtly as the foremost dramatists working in words alone.

In *Giulio Cesare in Egitto*, perhaps Handel's finest opera, Sesto is the son of the Roman general Pompeo, who has been murdered by the Egyptian tyrant; the youth, sung originally by a soprano and nowadays usually by a mezzo-soprano, vows to avenge his father in the aria *Svegliatevi nel core* (Awaken in my heart). In the opening section, his martial resolve seems indomitable; but then in the B section, when Sesto invokes the voice of his father's ghost, which enjoins heroic severity, the music turns soft and tremulous, with the suggestion that the son may be loath to perform the bloody work he appeared so eager to undertake. Finally, in the reprise of the A section, hysteria commandeers him: Sesto must come unhinged in order to talk himself into doing his filial Roman duty! The aria is as dramatically rich and potent as a scene from *Hamlet*.

Alcina (1735) rivals *Giulio Cesare* in excellence, and the title character's aria *Ombre pallide* (Pale shadows) demonstrates the art of drama in song at its highest. Alcina, a Circe-like island sorceress who captivates men sexually, then turns them into beasts or trees or rocks, is calling on spirits that no longer do her will, and she laments the erotic disenchantment of her beloved Ruggiero and the dissolution of her magic powers. Her despair is patent, and yet in the soaring vocal lines a savage, lacerating ecstasy emerges: There is exultation in the knowledge of her approaching ruin, and one apprehends the self-hatred at her core. Pride may have formerly concealed her disgust at her own malignancy, but any vanity is gone now, and in her naked misery she finds release. This is some of the most shattering operatic music ever written, and it serves the most acute sense of dramatic values.

But it is of course *Messiah* that remains Handel's nonpareil work. Here the secular and the sacred are joined, as Handel constructs a monument to everlasting truth on a pedestal of familiar, worldly beauty. In Handel's soundworld, biblical grandeur requires an admixture of joyous levity to portray fully the surpassing love of the God who suffered and died for human salvation. Some of the music is unmistakably churchly, based on the hymn rather than the dance or operatic aria: The bass recitatives and airs have all the majesty of prophetic utterance whose solemnity is amplified as only music can do. But the melody of the alto air *He was despised* could almost be set to a lament for lost love from *Alcina* or *Rodelinda*. Similarly, a chorus such as *For unto us a child is born* has the ebullient lightness of a pastoral dance from an Italian opera, though it will swell into hieratic magnificence. *His yoke is easy* is another brightly tripping chorus, which evokes happiness here, in this life, as all suffering is erased when one takes Christ into his soul.

Sam Ramey as Argante in 'Rinaldo,' 1984

Messiah is the voice of an earthly ecstasy that has no need of mysticism, but is available to all in their ordinary lives thanks to the sacrifice of Jesus. It is fitting that this oratorio has become the consummate Christmas musical staple: It exemplifies the community at glad-hearted worship, in a world that fulfills its spiritual needs.

And this community of souls extends well beyond the Christian flock. In *Henderson the Rain King*, Saul Bellow's hero, an American millionaire trying to heal his spiritual desolation with a journey into the African wild, is greeted warmly by the isolated Arnewi tribe. Anticipating revelation and renewal, Henderson is moved to sing to the Arnewi from *Messiah*: *He was despised* and *But who may abide the day of His coming*. Taking in the music, Willatale, the old queen of the tribe, the woman of Bittahness, says to him, "Grun-tu-molani." Henderson cannot wait to understand what she is saying, and the translator explains, "Say, you want to live. Grun-tu-molani. Man want to live."

That is what Handel's music does: It makes you want to live. There is no greater gift an artist can give his audience. ♦

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B&A

Black and White

What the modern eye saw when looking at Africa.

BY EVE TUSHNET

'Black and White, Paris' (1926) by Man Ray

CHRISTIE'S IMAGES / CORBIS

At first glance, the influence of African art on 20th-century modernism might seem boringly obvious. One glance at an Asante statuette and you can see Giacometti: the dark tones, the skeleton-thin figure, the high forehead with all the features huddled in the middle of the face. A Bamana female figure with stick-neck and bullet-breasts presages cubism, with its angular planes and aggressive abstraction.

But Washington's Phillips Collection has put together a sharp, broad-ranging show which focuses on Man Ray—the show's title is "Man Ray, African Art, and the Modernist Lens"—but explores many of the central questions of modern art. Does industrialization change human nature? Can premodern religion be reinterpreted or merely cannibalized? What counts as "realism," and who decides?

Man Ray, African Art, and the Modernist Lens
The Phillips Collection
Until January 10, 2010

The very first of the exhibit's many juxtapositions sets the theme: A statue of a male figure, with oil burnishing its helmet-like forehead, stands alone in a glass case. On the wall beside him hang high-contrast photographs in which he's made even glossier, even stranger, and even more alone. In Africa this statue was a part of tribal ritual, a means of communal access to the transcendent. Under the lens of the modernist, the statue becomes a staunch, mysterious symbol of human alienation.

The modernists varied in how their photographs presented the African religious objects. This show highlights the variation by including works from American, French, Russian, and Czech artists. Some, like Man Ray, chose high stylization: artificial darkness and heightened contrast. Others, like Walker Evans, often shot the same objects in soft grays, gentle angles, and unthreatening poses. Ray's pictures of a Bamileke figure known as the "Bangwa queen" show her presiding in a nightscape lit as if by lightning; one photo seems to show her laughing. Evans's portrayals show the queen in artificial daylight, her face unreadable.

The Phillips Collection has done a terrific job not only of contrasting these approaches but showing how neither approach is really placing the objects in their local context. Evans's naturalism is simply another Western genre, no more realistic than noir. The more obviously stylized artists tended to give the African objects a greater sense of transcendent inaccessibility. This is neither true—the objects would have been familiar, not alienating, to their makers—nor false, since the "anthropological" naturalist lens assumes that the objects and the religion they serve can be understood by Western audiences outside of their habitual ritual contexts.

The modernists in some ways treated African art like industrial detritus. There are surprising parallels between a Raoul Ubac solarized photograph of Nancy Cunard's collection of ivory bracelets and the many modernist photographs of rubber hoses or spiral metalwork in which industrial products were made to look like cast-off snakeskins or abandoned nautilus shells. In both the premodern and industrial cases, the objects are photographed so that their cultural meaning almost dissolves into a purely aesthetic experience: Big circles pile up and spill across the frame, and it doesn't necessarily matter whether the circles are African bracelets or Michelin tires.

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The strangeness of man-made objects remains the same.

Many photographs suggest a complicity between Westerners and the African objects. The image which advertises the exhibit, Ray's portrait of Simone Kahn, trades on the era's racial fears: A white woman, supine on a bed, gazes upside-down at the camera while a dark wooden figure of a naked man stands on her belly, seeming to look down at her and consider what it might do with her. And yet her gaze is cool and challenging. She wants you to see this. Similarly, a terrific photograph taken by Cecil Beaton of Edward James shows James with arms folded, watching the camera lens, with a big black Ekoi mask, all curving horns and chaos on the wall behind him. The photo has an air of wry menace, but the mask isn't confronting James: Both James and the mask are confronting you.

Some of the exhibit's most famous photographs, Ray's variant versions of *noire et blanche*, show a reclining white lady with closed eyelids and aggressive vamp lipstick, holding up a gleaming black mask whose oval shape resembles her head. The atmosphere is quiet, and the easy contrasts make the piece look like a cosmetics ad. (Modernists shifted readily from high-art to commercial applications, as a section of the exhibit devoted to fashion photography demonstrates.) A more complex interaction occurs between the "Bangwa queen" statue and a pale woman who sits at her feet, gazing up at her as the statue looks past her. The woman's arm rests between the statue's ankles, suggesting a connection between them; the Hitchcock shadows behind her suggest danger, but her expression seems admiring.

Two photographs cleverly juxtaposed make the same case that superficially similar uses of African objects can lead to deeply divergent images. First, there's a funny photo by Roland Penrose in which two white men sit on a couch, apparently in animated discussion—their features obscured by the outsized African and Oceanic masks over their faces. In a haunting Curtis Moffat photo, by contrast, the two white subjects in African masks are filmed with a gauzy, otherworldly glow. The masks make them dream figures, not parodies.

Yet perhaps the most interesting implication of this fascinating exhibit is that dream and parody are not so far removed. If exaggeration is the hallmark of both deracinated modernity and tribal religion, might this imply that humans in general live in, and long for, something beyond everyday reality? Neither the Westerners nor the Africans here believed that human nature could be represented solely through naturalistic depictions.

This show suggests that Western readings of African art required an insouciant disregard for the specificity of African religious cultures. Man Ray and his colleagues rearranged African religious objects into a new symbolic alphabet, a kind of godless syncretism whose high priest is the artist himself. The results are as beautiful and challenging as Simone Kahn. ♦

B&A

Avatarocious

Another spectacle hits an iceberg and sinks.

BY JOHN PODHORETZ

Avatar, we are told, does things with cameras and computers and actors that have never been done before. Its painstaking combination of real-life action and animation has, we are told, taken cinema to a new level. It cost anywhere from $328 million to $500 million, we are told, and took four years to make. It is a breakthrough, we are told, the boldest step into the future of filmmaking, an unparalleled achievement.

Avatar
Directed by James Cameron

What they didn't tell us is that *Avatar* is blitheringly stupid; indeed, it's among the dumbest movies I've ever seen. *Avatar* is an undigested mass of clichés nearly three hours in length taken directly from the revisionist westerns of the 1960s—the ones in which the Indians became the good guys and the Americans the bad guys. Only here the West is a planet called Pandora, the time is the 22nd century rather than the 19th, and the Indians have blue skin and tails, and are 10 feet tall.

John Podhoretz, editor of Commentary, *is* The Weekly Standard*'s movie critic.*

An American soldier named Jake Sully (Sam Worthington) is sent to make friends with the blue people. To effect this, scientists download his consciousness into a 10-foot-tall blue body. Jake discovers that the natives are wonderful in every possible way. They are so green it's too bad their skin has to be blue. They're hunters and they kill animals, but after they do so, they cry and say it's sad. Which only demonstrates their superiority. Plus they have (I'm not kidding) fiber-optic cables coming out of their patooties that allow them to plug into animals and control them. Now, that just seems wrong—I mean, why should they get to control the pterodactyls? Why don't the pterodactyls control them? This kind of biped-centrism is just another form of imperialist racism, in my opinion.

Like the Keebler elves, the Blue People all live in a big tree together and they go to church at another big tree, under which (we learn) lives Mother Earth, only since it isn't earth, she isn't called Mother Earth, but the Great Mother or something like that. Meanwhile, back among the humans at their base camp, there's a big fight. The scruffy scientists,

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led by Sigourney Weaver, want to learn, learn, learn about the wonders of the planet and the people and Mother Earth and the big tree and the pterodactyls. But the scientists work for an evil corporation (natch) and the evil corporation is only there because it wants—you can write the rest; but I will, just for the sake of expedience—to exploit the planet's natural resources. In particular, it wants to exploit a mineral called (again no kidding) unobtainium. And it turns out there's a big deposit of unobtainium under the Keebler Elf Tree. They want the elves to move.

Getting them to move is Jake Sully's job. And he does earn their trust, even though the leader of their tribe says, "His alien scent offends my nose!" (The line is translated from their nonexistent language with subtitles that are designed to look like the men's room signs at an Indian casino.) The Blue People, in particular the contemptuous and lovely Neytiri (Zoe Saldana), show him their wondrous ways. But before he can discuss hiring Allied Van Lines with them, the Evil Corporation intervenes.

It is run by an evil Yuppie, and the Yuppie's security is provided by an evil Marine. And for no good reason other than to get the movie into its second act, they decide to stage a military attack on the Elf Tree, thus blowing the zillions of dollars they sank into the project of making Jake Sully into a Blue Person rather than waiting a couple of weeks.

Oy, the suffering that ensues, all for some lousy unobtainium! Oy, the destruction! You can hear writer-director James Cameron weeping over his special-effects computer as the bad humans he created commit this terrible atrocity against the Blue People who don't exist. As for me, I was reminded of Oscar Wilde's immortal crack about Charles Dickens's tears as he killed off the child heroine of his *Old Curiosity Shop*: "It would take a heart of stone to read the death of Little Nell without laughing."

The only salvation for Pandora lies with our man Jake Sully turning into the leader of the blue-skinned people, rallying them to the cause of protecting their planet against the Evil Corporation. This, too, is unacceptably paternalistic, in my view; after all, why should giant blue people have to learn these things from a shrimpy white guy who doesn't even have a tail or built-in Skype?

Eventually, it falls to Jake to plug his fiber-optic cables into a plant and ask the Great Mother to do something. And she does. She rallies the pterodactyls, not to mention some rhinoceroses and dogs, to join with an army of blue people to take down the EC. In the end, it's Jake Sully vs. the Evil Marine, who is dressed up to look like (again, not kidding) a Rock 'Em Sock 'Em Robot, one of those ludicrous toys from the late 1960s that gave toys a bad name.

TWENTIETH CENTURY FOX FILM CORPORATION

You're going to hear a lot over the next couple of weeks about the movie's politics—about how it's a Green epic about despoiling the environment, and an attack on the war in Iraq, and so on. The conclusion does ask the audience to root for the defeat of American soldiers at the hands of an insurgency. So it is a deep expression of anti-Americanism—kind of.

The thing is, one would be giving James Cameron too much credit to take *Avatar*—with its mindless worship of a nature-loving tribe and the tribe's adorable pagan rituals, its hatred of the military and American institutions, and the notion that to be human is just way uncool—at all seriously as a political document. It's more interesting as an example of how deeply rooted these standard-issue counterculture clichés in Hollywood have become by now. Cameron has simply used these familiar bromides as shorthand to give his special-effects spectacular some resonance. He wrote it this way not to be controversial, but quite the opposite: He was making something he thought would be most pleasing to the greatest number of people.

Will it be? Aside from the anti-American, anti-human politics, the movie is nearly three hours long, and it doesn't have a single joke in it. There is no question that *Avatar* is an astonishing piece of work. It is, for about two-thirds of its running time, an animated picture that looks like it's not an animated picture.

On the other hand, who cares? It doesn't count for much that the technical skill on display makes it easier to suspend disbelief and make you think you're watching something take place on a distant planet. Getting audiences to suspend disbelief isn't the hard part; we suspend disbelief all the time. It's how we can see any movie about anything and get involved in the story. The real question is this: If *Avatar* were drawn like a regular cartoon, or had been made on soundstages with sets and the like, would it be interesting? Would it hold our attention?

The answer is, unquestionably no. There's no chance anybody would even have put it into production, no matter that Cameron made the box-office bonanza *Titanic*. So the question is: Does the technical mastery on display in *Avatar* outweigh the unbelievably banal and idiotic plot, the excruciating dialogue, the utter lack of any quality resembling a sense of humor? And will all these qualities silence the discomfort coming from that significant segment of the American population that, we know from the box-office receipts for Iraq war movies this decade, doesn't like it when an American soldier is the bad guy? ♦

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"U.S. President Barack Obama, in remarks aired late Sunday, awarded himself a B plus for his first 11 months in office, stressing in an interview with talk show queen Oprah Winfrey that there was still much to be done."

***—Agence France-Presse*, December 14, 2009**

(You Don't Always Have To) Just Do It

■ Nike rethinks slogan in wake of Tiger Woods scandal, 3C

USA TODAY Snapshots®

How other world leaders grade themselves:

Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi, Italy
Grade: D
"I shouldn't be in court so often. I should have been faithful to my wife. I should never have taken that mafia boss out to lunch and expensed it. And I should have ducked."

NEWSCOM

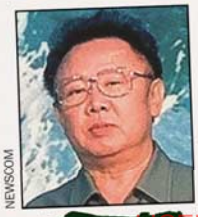
Prime Minister Vladimir Putin, Russia
Grade: A+
"I am the greatest leader Russia has ever known. Just ask anyone, and that's what you'll hear. If you happen to know someone who doesn't say that, please give me his name and address. Then ask that person the following week, and he'll tell you I am the greatest leader Russia has ever known. And if he still doesn't think so, his widow surely will."

President Hu Jintao, China
Grade: B
"I don't want to say 'A' lest some of my 'classmates' get jealous and, shall we say, kick me out of school. But I also don't want to give myself a low grade lest some of those 'classmates' kick me out for admitting mistakes. You have no idea how hard it is to grade oneself."

President Hugo Chávez, Venezuela
Grade: A
"How I grade myself is how the people of Venezuela would grade me, for I speak for them. And right now they are telling me I deserve an A. They also tell me I look great in red."

NEWSCOM

President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, Iran
Grade: A, C, F, G
"I will give myself any grade I desire. And if you disagree, there's a bag of stones with your name on it."



NEWSCOM

Supreme Leader Kim Jong-Il, North Korea
Grade: N/A
"God cannot be graded."

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